ALTAR FLOWERS FROM FAR AND NEAR

By A Priest of St Bede Abbey

Rose Bergmann 5¢

ST. MARGARETS SCHOOL

ALTAR FLOWERS

From Near and Far

Stories, Anecdotes and Incidents

WITH

Pious Reflections

---

for Clergy and Laity

By
A PRIEST OF ST. BEDE ABBEY
PERU, ILL.

IMPRIMI PERMITTIMUS,
VINCENTIUS, O. S. B.,
ABBAS S. BEDAE.

NIHIL OBSTAT,
VINCENTIUS HUBER, O. S. B.,
CENSOR DEPUTATUS.

IMPRIMATUR,
✠E. M. DUNNE,
EPISCOPUS PEORIENSIS.

Die 7, Martii, 1921.

DEDICATION.

TO THE VIRGIN MOTHER.

"Dignare me, laudare te!"

I

What the Sainted have tried to thy pleasing,
Good Mother! in prose and in lay;
Impelled by devotion unceasing,
I offer in tribute to thee.

II

The fruit of their Hyblaean screening,
The upland bees fragranted pay;
From the lowlands if poor is my gleaning,
Stores winnowed, I tender to thee.

III

Like of skylarks, so sweet is their singing,
Souls that soar the empyrial way;
Low my flight and my song though unwinning,
I pray, it be pleasing to thee.

IV

Sweet Hydromel, gold-chalic'd off'ring
Of love-tears, thy children essay;
If weeping and poor I come moth'ring,
May my tears be accepted by thee.

V

Some, the Ind and the Ophir outvying,
Hold a life-gem of fascetted ray!
A heart unadorned I yield, sighing:
"My poor heart, be it welcome to thee."

VI

In that Crystalléd City full-joying,
Saints, their Marian Epic portray;
There, in humblest and endless employing,
Permit me to love and praise thee.

PREFACE.

It was at the close of the sixth century when St. Augustine with thirty-nine Benedictines came to England to convert it to Christ. The lords and overlords of the island assembled in council with their king to decide what countenance should be shown the missionaries.

"Sire," said a Northumbrian chief addressing the king, "if the doctrines which these strangers from across the sea propose to teach us, will add even a little to our certainty as to whence we came and whither we are going, it were well for us to give them a hearing."

The incident is taken from St. Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation.

I borrow it in order to introduce in language similar to that of the Northumbrian earl, this book entitled "Altar Flowers, From Near and Far." If this book will add something, not to the evidences upon which the great Christian truths rest—for that is not its purpose—but by way of inferences, by examples, analogies and reflections, to make these truths a degree clearer, a little more appreciated, somewhat better loved, and if it will help to a more generous fulfilment of the obligations which spring from them, then it were well all should read it.

The book is entitled "Altar Flowers, From Near and Far," because it is made up of flowers fresh and preserved from many gardens, the half of which were especially trained to do honor to the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, whilst the other half gathered more at random, were selected of a darker hue in order to set off and give variety to the offering.

THE AUTHOR.
Feast of St. Frances of Rome,
Oblate of St. Benedict.
March 9, 1921.

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ALTAR FLOWERS IN SPECIES

GOD'S SPECIAL PROVIDENCES FOR OUR AGE

Whatsoever in comparison with past centuries be the appraisement in faith and morals of our present age, and whatsoever be the value of the opinion of those who are disposed to see in the irreligious and revolutionary spirit of our day those "premonitory signs" which are to usher in the end, this much is certain, that we are living in times of extraordinary mercy. Never before have so many spiritual agencies been at work as are in operation today to reclaim man and to bind him to Christ and to His Blessed Mother. Spiritual agencies, which, in the form of special devotions, of new or rejuvenated societies and confraternities, draw from the deepest recesses of the most loving Hearts of Jesus and Mary and present to us, truths and revelations so loveable and appealing, so sublime and efficacious, as to augur on part of our Holy Mother the Church a feverish haste and anxiety to gather in her children to safety before the night of eternity surprise them.

It is only within the past hundred years that the Society for the Propagation of Faith was organized and systematized and that financial aid is being extended regularly to the Foreign Missions. As a

spiritual counterpart to this Society, to bless and to prosper it, it is well within this same century that the grand union of prayer has sprung up which through the confraternities of the Living Rosary and the Apostleship of Prayer, has welded into one great spiritual league the whole of Christendom. As a consequence of this spiritual and material aid offered to the Missionary Apostolate, we may venture to say that there is not a place in all the world today where the Gospel is not being preached and therefore, that the command of Christ, "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature," has been fulfilled.

Consider next, as a manifestation of the spirit of the age and of God's special providence in its regard, the popular devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. St. Margaret Mary, indeed, was its first propagator and apostle. But nevertheless, as the tiny rivulet, after slowly and laboriously wearing its way past many an obstruction of stubborn hill and stony ground, unites at last with others of its kind, to form the majestic, swift and silent stream, so also, after having during many years encountered impediments of all kinds, it is only in our day that the devotion to the Sacred Heart, welling up and flowing over from ten thousand individual hearts, has merged and swelled into a mighty, all-embracing flood of love and worship encompassing the world. The number of pious souls who each First Friday of the month congregate around the Living Shrine of Love, the Sacred Heart, is count-

less. It is a world-devotion externalized as such in the religious life of the Catholic People and proclaimed such by order of Leo XIII who in 1899 commanded that all mankind should be consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

And what means this recrudescence of the Holy Name Society? Nothing more reassuring and promising for the spiritual welfare of America could well be suggested than the leaping to arms in every part of our country, of the élite of our manhood, to oppose in serried ranks under the banner of the Holy Name, the spirits of blasphemy and uncleanness and their abettors. With the verdancy of a spiritual spring this Society has turned many a waste of profanity and obscenity into a garden spot where flower reverence and love for God's Holy Name.

Turning now from the Divine Son to His Blessed Mother, it is typical of our favored age to mark with what enthusiasm devotion to Mary is cultivated and how it thrives within the pale of our hearts and homes. In the spring of the year, May, the month of flowers, is wholly hers who is the Lily of the Field, the Virgin of Virgins, the Immaculate; her vernal wreath, the rose, with the lily blends. Where today is there a church without its May-Devotion? However, that which is distinctively and exclusively the tribute of our day to the Immaculate Mother, is a second wreath; a crown entwined with scarlet and with golden leaves woven to do her honor. When the year is hastening to its melancholy close and the autumn silence reminds

us of the solitude of the grave, then, in the Rosary-Month, October, agitated and oppressed with the fear of death and its sequel, the beads of fervent petition slip through our fingers, to her the Mother of God, our Mother, our solace and hope now and in the hour of death.

If then, in ways so manifold, so tender and so resourceful, to win our souls, the love of our Blessed Saviour Who wishes that all men be saved, is signalized as never before, what will we say in regard to that ineffable decree of Pius X on Frequent Communion, and to that other grand and glorious characteristic of our day, the Perpetual Public Adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament as realized in that incessant round of the Forty Hours Exposition, with which almost every diocese is blessed? Does not this intimate uninterrupted communion with the Eucharistic Mystery reveal the very throb and pulsation of the heart of that infinitely loving Savior, Who not only invites, but almost compels us to come to Him in order to be gathered amongst the blessed to His Bosom?

It is because the provident Christian, convinced on the one hand that devotion to the Blessed Sacrament alone will enable the faithful to face and victoriously to endure the terrible tribulations which will antecede the End of the World, and perceiving on the other, with what yearning and persistent urging Holy Church as never before, is trying to make her children realize and embody in their lives the truth that Christ

in the Eucharist is their one pledge of salvation, concludes that the End is imminent. Whether right or wrong in his conjecture, he loses nothing. He, however, will lose much and all, who fails to notice and to enter into the spirit and mind of the Church who in our day places before all men more conspicuously and insistently than ever the sublime dogma of the Blessed Sacrament and what it entails.

"Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Sacred Heart may be said to be, indeed, the greatest devotions of these last times. This is the evening of the world, and the cry of evening goes up from the heart of Christendom: 'Abide with us for the day is far spent.' The noon is past, the shadows are lengthening, the weariness of the hour is on us, and the soul muses on rest in the bosom of God.

In the austere morning air man goes forth to labor; he thinks little, he speaks less of his feelings, be they joyous or be they sad; but when the faint vesper sweetness is on the breeze, the heart turns towards its home to seek repose on the heart which it loves.

Jesus, we have forgotten Thee often during the glare of busy day; our eyes could not behold Thee, though Thou wast with us, in the heat and dust of the road; but now we cannot, we will not, be without Thee, for all is gloom and darkness save with Thee.

Abide with us, Lord, for the day is far spent. Let the lamp of Thy tabernacle be the light of our dwell-

ings; and as every other light is one by one extinguished, let us trim the sacred flame and watch before Thee till the everlasting day shall dawn."

—THOMPSON.

MY LAST MASS.

I

'Tis many years ago,
With fervor quite aglow,
Friends thronged me round the Altar offering;
At this First Mass I said,
My thoughts so wildly sped;—
That day and honor, solely God's, I shared with kith and kin.

II

The Masses since I've said,
For Living, for the Dead,
In apathy or criminal routine;
The past, for this allow,
That I atonement vow,
In planning now my Mass, the last, against defects to screen.

III

To none but God is known
That fraughted morning's dawn,
When I the Mass will for the last time say.
Nor kin nor strangers will
That day the chapel fill—
Oh! bless this tribute last, which Thee in solemn rites I'll pay.

IV

To give due court to Thee,
Due love and sanctity,
I'll pray, I'll beg Thy Virgin Mother dear,
To stand by my right hand;
To left St. Joseph stand;
My Angel Guardian, Thrones, and Altar Seraphs near.

V

I'll Joseph imitate
My heart His crib I'll make,
So Mother, trust you Jesus to my home.
Then, Father Benedict,
Leave not me derelict;
Nor thou my patron Benedict, blest Pilgrim of Boulogne.

VI

And other circling tires,
Of the angelic choirs,
Will bring the love and purity I lack;
Last come more Patron Saints,
Who know my daily plaints,
Whom I beseech my service past to mend of stain and brack.

VII

If 'mid this heav'nly scene,
Cold I myself demean;
My guilt burn out in sacrificial fire!
And hierarchic throng,
So help my love along,
To kindle in this Mass—my last, a love endless and high'r.

VIII

O grant my full requests,
My Last Mass' deep behests:—
Forgive me and my kindred all trespass;
For soul or body-wound,
To whom in justice bound,
Or by love-tie: oh! save us all through my Last Holy Mass.

ALTAR FLOWERS.

It is in little things, in the sympathetic word, in the glow of the eye, in the unaffectedness of the gesture, in the simple character of the token, rather than in formal speech and studied grace and priceless gift, that the refinement of love of those who love fervently, is revealed.

In the life of that heroic woman St. Chantal, I single out as a trait of her exquisite love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, a practice, which in the life of an ordinary Christian might be nothing more than an act of indifferent piety.

Poor in all things, she like so many other servants of God, was prodigal in all that pertained to the furnishings and equipment of the altar and the church. She was delighted whenever, connected with any foundations she made, a flower-garden was kept or a conservatory even if possible, so that at all seasons of the year choice flowers might be available to place before the Blessed Sacrament.

On Sundays and holidays when the Sisters as was their custom, presented her with a bouquet of beautiful flowers, she after receiving it gratefully and holding it for a moment in her hand, would immediately place in on the altar. Only when the flowers had lost their fragrance and had faded she would take back the bouquet and treasure it in her cell.

One day a Sister asked her for the reason of this. "My daughter," she said, "color and fragrance are the life of these flowers. I send them before the Blessed Sacrament where one by one they fade and die. I want to be like them. I want my life which is gradually passing away, to end before God whilst honoring this sublime mystery of Holy Church."

Flowers speak a language all their own. In the fervid, poetical Orient, the rosebud betokens hope; the bud encircled with thorns, hope and fear. The white rose typifies candor and innocence; the rose in full bloom, beauty at its meridian. The crimson pomegranate bloom speaks of burning love, the hyacinth of adoration.

But it is a double language, this; a language interpretative of human love as readily as of love divine. Ardent souls offer the lily, the rose, and the violet, as sweet and poetic tokens of love, loyalty and sacrifice. They mean in floral language to express the hope and desire, that God will find their works as agreeable and their prayers as sweet-smelling in His sight, as are the color and fragrance of flowers pleasing to men. It is with reverence that I strain the accommodational sense of verse three, Psalm xxiii, thus: "Who shall ascend unto the altar of God" to deck it with the lily and the rose? and answer, "He who is pure of heart." Those gorgeous blooms towering upward, entwining themselves around and canopying the head and transept of the cross: the regal flowers of princely munificence, of seraphic contemplation, of heroic obedience,

of martyrdom, are for the saints to offer. And offer them they did: St. Catherine of Sienna and sainted Gemma of Lucca, their mystic crowns of roses when they were espoused to their Heavenly Bridegroom; St. Francis of Assisi, when wounded by the Seraph's ray on Mount Alvernia, and St. Benedict of Nursia, when he stained the rosebush with his blood.

Ah! the rose of the Umbrian Wilds. Beautiful it is and fragrant when in its vermilion glory. But beyond its exquisite scent and radiance of color, do its blood-stained petals and angry thorns delight the eye of the children of St. Benedict; for they tell of the victory their Blessed Father gained with the help of their lacerating spurs, over his rebellious flesh. Seven hundred years later, the great St. Francis of Assisi visited the coppice and kissed the rose-trees he found there and blessed them, whereupon, the old legend says, the stalks burst forth into riotous bloom of most beautiful roses, of a variety so hardy in texture that neither frost nor snow could wilt them.

His love of nature and sympathy with all creation is one of the most charming characteristics of St. Francis of Assisi. It was the natural goodness of his heart, regenerated and transformed by grace, which made him so considerate to animals, and urged him to request the friars to have always "a little plot in their gardens full of the sweetest flowers to invite those who beheld them to praise their Creator."

The Benedictines welcomed the Franciscans from the very first. "It would seem," remarks the biographer

of St. Francis, "as if a Benedictine could not refuse anything to a Franciscan." St. Francis and his disciples loved and revered St. Benedict and his Order. This affection for St. Benedict and his sons appears in the life of so many servants of God. St. Philip Neri went to Monte Cassino to consult the monks about his vocation. St. Aloysius Gonzaga, to quote from his life, "who so sedulously shunned all society never lost the opportunity of seeing and discoursing with monks who passed through Castiglione. He used, in particular, to rejoice when any Benedictines of Monte Cassino came that way." His spiritual father, St. Ignatius Loyola, visited Monte Cassino with predilection. It was after giving a retreat to Father Peter Ortiz, doctor of the University of Paris and advocate at the Papal Court for Catherine of Aragon, that the Saint showed his tender affection for the sons of St. Benedict, by giving to each of them as a remembrance of his visit, a copy of his Spiritual Exercises. The saints all alike admired and imitated in the glorious Patriarch, his martyr-like fortitude, his benignity and his spotless chastity. The Umbrian rosebush with its marvelous, inviolate bloom, typifies the heroism of purity and love. Saints alone can place upon the altar such roses—roses that seem to have come from Paradise. Because their love and spirit of sacrifice are boundless, their gifts which they bring to God are magnificent. Metaphorically speaking, their altar-offerings are the gorgeous flowering trees of the tropic zones; the great fan palms of exquisite grace, the tulip

tree one mass of scarlet flower, the candelabra-like Euphorbia, the gigantic cactus aflame with color. Exotics these, all of them, and therefore beyond the reach of ordinary Christians. But let him, who wishing to please God, chooses to place upon the altar the sorrowing ivy and marigold, the humble violet, the fragrant mignonette, the ardent dark-crimsoned carnation and all the minor symbolic flowers; at least and first of all, offer there his tribute of those corresponding blooms which in the language of St. Francis of Sales, flower at the foot of the Cross: the hidden virtues of sweet condescension and candor; of meekness and patience; of affability and gentleness; of modesty, simplicity, humility, and an abiding sorrow for sin.

A FANCY.

If charmed by so much beauty we,
How would enchant their singing!

If lily in the cloister'd field
As altar flower sent;
So pure, so fair—would sing, reveal'd,
Its head toward Jesus bent!

If sweet-voiced flowers in vases near,
In dur and moll combined;
In dulcet plaint or rhythmic cheer,
A lilt or sob defined!

If rose sang a joy-offering,
The hyacinth, a pray'r;
The marigold voiced suffering,
The cypress, a grave air:

If charmed by so much beauty we,
How would enchant their singing!

LOOK, LOVE, AND ADORE!

In 1860, Tyndall, the English physicist, was sojourning among the Penine Alps, looking for a favorable opportunity to ascend the Matterhorn. The weather which had been cloudy and threatening the last half of the week was promising to clear up by Sunday. Impatient to begin his tour of exploration, he asked Marquinas, the guide, whether in the event the next day, Sunday, were fine, he would accompany him on his trip. "No sir!" was the prompt reply; "in Val Tournanche, Sunday is kept holy." It was only after much arguing and when his guide had spoken to and arranged with his confessor for a mass at 2 a. m., that he consented to start the ascent on Sunday.

"No sir! in our town Sunday is kept holy," was a glorious boast and one well worth making. There were cities and towns in Europe then, and no doubt there are such today, to which the words would or would not apply. If we were to single out one which on account of its Christian Sunday observance would justify its townsmen to boast as did the mountaineer of the Alpine village, it would be rural Ars, a town near Lyons, in France. But it was not always so. Religion was in a lamentable state in Ars and the country around, when the Blessed John Baptist Vianney was sent there in 1818 by the archbishop of Lyons, to shepherd and

to reform it. A more unpromising field could hardly have been assigned him and if in time it bore the most marvelous fruit, this next to God, was due solely to the apostolic labor of the holy curé, for he had no helpers.

Did I say he had no helpers? Yes, excepting two or three pious women and as many men perhaps, who by their devotion and zeal edified and cheered him. Conspicuous amongst these few was an old fieldhand of singular piety. Never a day passed that he did not visit the church, where in mute adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, he remained as long as his time permitted, for one, two and three hours in a stretch. The curé who observed him with delight, was struck however by the fact, that the old peasant during his long vigils never once moved his lips in prayer. So one day, approaching him, the holy priest asked: "My good little man, what do you say to your dear Savior all the time you are in His Presence?" "I say nothing at all to Him and He says nothing to me," he replied; "but I look at Him and He looks at me." The Blessed Vianney never forgot the answer; he thought it so beautiful and expressive. And thoughtful and expressive indeed it was, even profound. The simple plowman of the Dombes answered better than he knew; or was it by a flash of heavenly light into his soul that he was led to speak thus;

"I look at Him and He looks at me," is not this the very best of prayers? Prayer means communion with God, and is not that communing the deepest and most

expressive, where lover and beloved find no words adequate to express what they feel in each other's presence? The true attitude after all, of the creature toward his Creator, of the mortal child in presence of his Immortal Father, is that of silence, of mute love and adoration. What is all human language bearing upon the Eucharistic Mystery, even of the seraphic saints, but the babbling of infants struggling for expression; and the learned and formalized prayers of the sage and the divine, in what do they excel the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal? Does the child basking in its mother's arms, speak? The child looks up to its mother, the mother smiles back at her child—in this mutual act, so simple, we have the deepest expression of love human nature is capable of epitomized. And in the supernatural order, it is the eye fixed upon the tabernacle, the face aglow, the silent tear, the palpitating heart, that tells beyond the utmost resources of human speech, what the heart feels and cannot utter. At the Last Supper, Holy Thursday Night, in that tragic moment when Christ announced that there was a traitor in their midst, His disciples filled with consternation and sorrow, began, as St. Luke says, to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing; and according to St. Mark, sorrowfully to say to Him one by one, "Is it I?" But John, the disciple whom Jesus especially loved, spoke his anguished love and sympathy in the only language that love knows, by leaning upon the Lord's Breast at supper and pressing his head against His Most Sacred Heart.

According to the Franciscan Chronicles, Angelus of Pisa was commissioned by St. Francis to establish the Order in England. Angelus, though not a scholar himself, was desirous nevertheless that his friars should become learned men. It is related that once whilst Provincial, he visited the Franciscan House at Oxford to see how his brethren were progressing in their studies under the famous Doctor Robert Grostete. To his amazement and horror he found them disputing the question: "Whether there is a God?" "Alas, alas!" he is said to have exclaimed, "Simple friars penetrate the heavens and the learned dispute whether there is a God." Now, I wonder, whether he was quite so simple as not to know that the disputation was only to exercise their dialectic skill, or whether he had not a deeper and a better reason than the Chroniclers allow, for deprecating discussions, by affirmation and harsh denial, of such questions at all. If so, he was not the last one to question the necessity and utility of skeptical disputations.

There are those who never come away from the study of Philosophy or from the philosophic study of any truth without feeling their fervor cooled, whatever the gain that may have accrued to their intellect. Despite its necessity and advantages, it seems so cold, and almost unfilial and disloyal, to seek in Reason for confirmation of what Faith teaches. Especially is this true when we approach the Eucharistic Mystery too eagerly with the resources of Philosophy so pitiably inadequate. The Sacrament of the Eucharist is the

Sacrament of Love. It is not the intellect, it is the loving heart that has the key to unlock and show us its treasures. Our Blessed Savior Himself when He prophesied the institution of this August Sacrament, was plain but curt. He did not argue, He did not explain. He made no effort to render the acceptance of the promised gift palatable to the mind of His hearers, neither by appealing to the sanctity of His life and the purity of His doctrine, nor by directing their attention to the divine testimony of His miracles. It was to be the last bequest of His infinite love and it is of the nature of perfect, passionate love, to be sensitive and to regard as a profanation the revelation of its secrets. It is not necessary to probe a mother's heart to see whether it throbs with love. That she loves us we do not prove by elaborate reasoning; we know it because we are conscious of it; we feel it. It was not only for the reason—to borrow a sentence from a Lapide—"that it were folly and temerity to pretend to fathom the infinitely infinite abysses of God," but also because the Gift, which our Savior then promised, was of so sublime a nature and its purpose to effect a union between Himself and man, so exquisite and intimate, that His Love which so willed and decreed to manifest itself, could not brook the least questioning as to the how and why, and felt to the quick the smallest doubt and hesitation. Love alone can understand love. Its mysteries seem folly to the world. This carnal mind Our Savior had in mind when He said: "Give not that which is holy

to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine." Matt. 7, 6. This carnal mind the Primitive Church had in view in her Discipline of the Secret, when she withheld from the hard gaze of the promiscuous multitude this Sacrament of Love, mindful of her Master's injunction to keep safe the secret of the King.

"Be not highminded but fear," writes St. Paul to the Romans, and lose not sight of your ignorance. Before the Blessed Sacrament we complain that time drags, because we do not know how to occupy ourselves, we do not know what to say. There is no reason for any studied speech and we need not say anything. It is only necessary with the eye of faith to see Jesus present before us; to know that He has a heart like ours seeking to be loved and esteemed and thanked. We have only to regard Him, as in truth He is, our One Friend Who has always loved us, Who will always love us and Whose love alone can and will make us forever happy. Not as upon a stranger look at Him but as on One Who knows you well, Who thinks of you continually, Who is eager to unite Himself to you in most intimate friendship, and Who is trying in every way to make you eternally happy. Oh! how beautiful and sacred is the House of God wherein the ever-present Savior is worshiped on His altars by adoring crowds and where, alone or in their midst, you will find a Friend Whom you may invoke at any time in all your joys and sorrows. Regard Him then with love for He so regards you!

HALCYON DAYS.

The halcyon or kingfisher has been a favorite bird with the poets from Ovid to Shakespeare to Tennyson. Its beauty, its graceful manners, but especially its traditional rôle as harbinger of that fortnight, more or less, of summer weather which falls in with the coming of the Winter Solstice, causes it to be regarded with almost superstitious veneration. It is the calm-creating, storm-defying bird of Pliny, of Ovid, of Plutarch, who all alike, from a simple error, made the kingfisher an ocean bird, and asserted that it floated on the sea in its nest during the entire season of incubation.

In the vocabulary of the mariner, the phrase, "halcyonic days," designates an interval of ten to fourteen days in midwinter, during which the boisterous sea is calm and the icy northern winds give way to vernal breezes, "while birds of calm," as the poet says, "sit brooding on the charméd wave." This interval of calm, say the sailors, the storm-god from pity grants the little halcyon in order that it may leisurely build its nest strong and secure against wind and weather. When the respite is over, then with redoubled violence the boreal winds come down howling from their northern haunts and lash the ocean into fury but without

injury to the little storm-bird. Warm and taut, it safely rides the waves up their towering heights and down their yawning depths; the opening of its well-poised nest pointing ever to the skies.

We are seafarers traveling from time to eternity over the ocean of life. In the storm and stress of the elements many a halcyonic lull is granted us within which we can prepare and strengthen ourselves against the buffetings of the winds and of the waves. Our Holy Church is an ark of safety, built not by human hands but by God Himself; an ark that will ride out any storm whatever. Within the holy precincts of the Church a halcyonic peace reigns at all times. Let the assaults and machinations of the enemy be ever so well planned and well directed, let the trials of life be ever so bitter and overwhelming, let the conflict of passions be loud and angry like the waves which threatened to engulf the bark of Peter on the Galilean Sea, Christ is present within His Church; He is the Pilot at the helm. If there we prostrate ourselves before Him in tears and prayer, He will command the waves to subside and "be still!"

Before the blessed tabernacle we will find halcyonic days in season and out of season; reassurance and peace and comfort. Before the holy tabernacle the words of the psalmist, so wonderfully beautiful, are verified: "For the sparrow hath found her a house; and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young. Even thy altars O Lord of hosts; my King and my God!" Psalm 83.

SONNET.

When mist and wrack make dismal sea and sky,
When Boreal winds and Neptune meet in fray,
A pitying truce is deigned the halcyons' lay,
To shape the nursling crib their sore wants by.

In full the winter calm the storm-birds ply,
Their barklet fashioning taut 'gainst blasting day.
Secured, the nestlings glide the abysmal way,
Or buoyant rise, sweet-trusting, heaven high.

Ye restless birds, faring all climes among!
Prepare for summer storm and winter douse,
Your timid hearts, where halcyon peace is sung.
The sparrow, look! hath found herself a house;
A nest, the turtle for herself and young.
There, the holy altars nigh, a home espouse.

Ps. 83.

THE HIDDEN GUEST.

Nothing is more touching in the life of St. Alexius, the saint who for the love of God gave up all that the world holds dear—titles, honors, wealth and home; who, unrecognized by his own kindred, for thirty years had nowhere to rest his head but a cot under a stairway of his father's palatial house on the Aventine; nothing is more touching, than the words spoken in holy anguish by his mother, when, in the beggar who had just breathed his last beneath her doorstep, she recognized her son: "O my son! my long-lost, my darling son. Alas! is it only now that it has been granted me to recognize thee;" So will even the best of us exclaim when upon our entrance into heaven, we come to see and to know Jesus and what an ineffable privilege we enjoyed in Holy Communion. Is it only now that I realize what Holy Communion is in all its wondrous reality? Is it only now that I understand Who it was that stood so often timidly knocking at the door of my heart, pleading for admittance; Whom, if I welcomed at all, it was with a welcome cold and reluctant! Yes, alas! I know now, Him Whom I received as if He were a stranger and to Whom as lodgment I assigned but a corner of my heart; this hidden Guest was the infinitely good most loving Jesus, my Savior and my God! Time and again the Holy Cure d'Ars, in an ecstasy of love toward Jesus, melted into tears when relating this episode of St. Alexius in its application to the Blessed Sacrament.

THE BISHOP OF GAZA.

The saintly Porphyrius, the bishop of Gaza, came to Constantinople to obtain a much desired favor from the Emperor Arcadius. His petition was carefully drawn up but he was at a loss when and how most effectually to present it. Seated in the royal park worrying over the matter, he noticed a bevy of nurses leisurely passing by with the new born prince imperial Theodosius, in their charge. The mind of the holy bishop was made up instantly. Approaching the royal infant he deftly slipped his petition beneath the silken coverlet that overspread its couch and awaited developments. Arcadius, coming into the garden shortly after, saw his child and hastened to lift it into his arms, to press and to fondle it when, lo, and behold! the hidden paper falling to the ground, the request which it bore and the author of it, were revealed. So agreeably surprised and touched was Arcadius with this happy expedient of the bishop that he granted him more than he had prayed for.

The application is obvious. After the Consecration of the Mass, have we not Christ the Son of God upon the altar, of Whom at the Jordan, a voice from heaven was heard saying: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?" In that sublime moment of the sacrifice when the Eternal Father is looking down com-

placently upon His only Son, if, in imitation of the holy bishop of Gaza, we place our request whatever it may be, upon the altar, slipping it under the sacred altar linen, so to speak, or under the blessed corporal; we may well resign its issue to our Heavenly Father. Jesus Himself will sponsor it for us.

THE HOST ALOFT.

It happened during his military career that Alphonsus of Albuquerque chanced once upon a time to be at sea with all his soldiers. A terrific storm arose which threatened to shipwreck the fleet and to engulf him and all his men. Every expedient known to mariners had been tried to avert the threatening disaster; it was of no avail. The heavens were stormed with agonizing prayers and vows; the ear of God was closed against them. Then as if by inspiration, Alphonsus suddenly snatching from its mother's arms a little child, held it aloft against the angry skies and prayed: "O God! though all here present are sinners in Thy sight yet is this child guiltless before Thee; if not on account of our prayers and deserts, then because of this innocent child at least, grant us mercy and safety."

Silhouetted against an angry and lightning-riven sky the soldier Alphonsus, holding aloft an infant child as proxy for himself and crew to implore God's mercy —what a subject this would make, awe-inspiring and sublime, if done in Rembrandt's golden haze?

But what master can paint from real life a picture at all comparable to what is revealed to the eye of the soul when the priest at Mass elevates the Sacred Host? Then do we see lifted up in the sight of angry heaven, not an innocent child, but the Son of God Himself,

Who as our Victim pleads to disarm the terrible vengeance of God which our sins and ingratitude have merited. The words spoken on Mt. Tabor are here reversed. Not as addressed to man, but as addressed to our Heavenly Father may we construe the text: "This is my Son, hear ye Him." For the Father will hear, must hear, when His well-beloved Son intercedes for us.

WAGNER-PARSIFAL.

"At the moment of Consecration does not a feeling of holy awe come over the people as they kneel in the presence of the Eucharistic God?" Richard Wagner, the great German operatic composer and poet, inquired of a priest in Munich.

Brunetière in his Essay on Renan the apostate, says: "By a final irony, what is best in his work, the freshest, the truly exquisite, is what he put there, not at all unconsciously, but better still, in order to combat it"—namely, the Christian Religion and the Holy Catholic Church—"and his most beautiful pages are beautiful only because they are inspired, penetrated, impregnated, with the sense of the grandeur and value of all that he worked forty years to destroy."

The words of the distinguished French critic in reference to Renan are just as applicable to many other keen and brilliant minds outside the Church, who even whilst maligning and attacking her from ignorance or malice, unconsciously betray in many a line here and there in their works, that they admire and borrow from and copy her. Like the prophet Balaam against the Israelites, they go out to curse Holy Church, and unwillingly or unwittingly praise and bless her. There is not a dogma the Church teaches, not a devotion

which she commends, but has been lauded and defended by one or other apologist outside her pale: Confession, Purgatory, Devotion to the Mother of God and the saints. For example, can a more caustic condemnation of the Protestant attitude toward Purgatory, or a better indirect commendation of it, be found than in the words which the passionate Protestant, Charles Kingsley, puts into the mouth of Grace Harvey, the heroine of his novel "Two Years Ago," as she comments on a wreck she observed at sea: "It is strange is it not," gazing at the wreck, "that it was a duty to pray for all those poor dead ones last night, but that to pray for them this morning is a sin?" If I chose to do so, with what a selection of varied and beautiful tributes of praise and admiration of Holy Church could I burden this paper with, culled from the writings of poets from Milton to Byron and from every master of prose from Bacon to Johnson, to Macaulay, to George Eliot. We have an instance to the point in Wagner and his Parsifal.

Richard Wagner, the great musical composer, was a man of wonderful mind. Without any positive religious convictions, his genius drew his attention to the Church, especially in his religious masterpiece Parsifal. In choosing as matter The Quest of the Holy Grail for a musical drama, his artistic instinct convinced him from the very first, that if the legend was to be worked into a grand spectacle possessing dynamic unity in its parts and as a whole, it must be based upon the Catholic conception of the Eucharist.

Accordingly by way of preliminary study, it was in 1865, he called upon a priest in Munich for instruction about the Mass. He studied it as a liturgical spectacle, as a sacred scenical act, in all its parts and sequence; with the Missal open before him, he followed step by step the ritual sacrifice, inquired the meaning of every ceremony and how and when it originated. He was particularly inquisitive to know just when the Consecration takes place, and it was in reference to this sublime act that he asked: "At the moment of Consecration in the Mass does not a feeling of holy awe overpower the people when they stand as they then do in the presence of the Eucharistic God?" There are those who see in the dramatic opera Parsifal, a deep and most reverential symbolistic representation of the Sacrifice of the Altar; and who affirm that howsoever far Wagner the philosopher may have strayed to the left in his religious speculations, Wagner the consummate artist in Parsifal, is true and orthodox in conceiving and interpreting the festival of the Holy Grail as the Sacrifice of the Mass.

This opinion, which appears to be well grounded, I do not think worth while to defend, because the Holy Mass is so sublime and ineffable an act that it seems a desecration to bring it before a promiscuous audience no matter where or when; neither will any setting, let it be ever so reverential, save such an exhibition from being daring and scandalous. It is a condition for the worthy celebrant of the Sacrifice of the Mass that the place, as far as possible, be select and sacred;

and therefore no matter how worthy the motive, the Holy Mass may never be made to serve as a theatrical spectacle. But this we find intelligible—the supposition of the great composer, that Catholics at the moment of Consecration must be struck with awe when Christ becomes present on the altar.

It was only for the purpose of leading up to this most reasonable observation of Richard Wagner, that I have introduced his name and opera at all. If Christ, as faith teaches, is really and truly and substantially present on the altar after the Consecration of the species of bread and wine; present with His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity; present as true God and true Man, and moreover, as our Victim and Sacrifice; it is surely then with a feeling of awe that we regard the divine spectacle being enacted before our eyes, and with profoundest adoration and fervent love and gratitude, that we kneel in the Divine Presence.

Cold must be the heart that does not thrill with emotion at that moment; little the faith and languid the love that does not bring a tear to the eye or a welcome to the lips when Christ, the Lover of Souls, descends from heaven to share our exile with us and to nourish us with His own Flesh and Blood. The ineffable happiness of the Blessed Mother Mary when she bore Him in her bosom and held Him in her arms on Christmas Night, is ours in the Holy Sacrifice and Holy Communion. St. Joseph and Blessed Simeon and Anne were not more favored than are we.

We read in the Life of the Ven. Joseph Benedict Cottolengo, that at the Consecration and Communion he seemed to be rapt to heaven; his quivering body, his radiant beautiful eyes, revealed to those present the joy with which his heart overflowed. His brother, Ignatius, a lively, playful lad, who often served the Mass of his Reverend Brother, on returning home one day asked his mother why Joseph wept so much at the altar. "Let him weep" answered the mother, "Joseph knows well why he weeps; tears shed at the altar bring joy." The same is related of St. John Baptist de Rossi; he trembled with loving fear and holy awe at every Mass after Consecration. In fact, all the servants of God assisted at the Holy Sacrifice with child-like love indeed, but with fear also, for they well knew that in God's sight no one is holy. Yea, even the angelic choir of the Thrones and the Altar Seraphs marvel and tremble and adore in presence of the Holy Mystery. It is only the Christian, ignorant of the first principles of his faith; or he who is cold and indifferent to the love of Christ; or he who is absorbed with and distracted by the affairs of life, can assist at Mass without feeling moved to adoration, love and gratitude. The angels, no doubt, look upon the stolid heedlessness and ingratitude of men with grieved amazement and ask, "How can they at the moment of Consecration when face to face with Christ, the Almighty God and their Savior, remain unmoved and not tremble with fear?"

LOTUS-EATERS.

The earlier historians and writers, Xenophon and Pliny for example, speak of a certain people in southern Europe and northern Africa who subsisted wholly upon a certain fruit called the Lotus. The effects of this fruit are said to have been the extinction of all love for one's country, for one's friends, for one's home.

If modern Therapeutics knows of no plant which has these effects, it knows of many a plant and tree like the poppy and the upas whose secretions are deadly.

In the moral order, however, we have the upas of gluttony, the upas of lust; we have the forbidden fruit of the three concupiscences, which destroy faith and extinguish all legitimate love; the love of God, the love of virtue, the love of one's friends and of one's home. In regard to this fruit the primal threat will forever apply: "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou shalt die."

But there is a growth of another kind, two plants twinned by mystical association, the wheat and the vine, the fruit of which in its effects upon the soul is more life-giving than was the mythical lotus presumed baneful and death-dealing. Wheaten bread and the juice of the grape by the words of Consecration

in the Mass are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and become that heavenly food and drink of which our Savior said: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life." To partake of this heavenly food and drink will increase within the soul the love for God and man and quench the fire of concupiscence.

AVE JESU!

Although the following incident hinges upon nothing more than a fortunate coincidence, I relate it in order to draw attention to a most praiseworthy custom among our people, that namely, of bowing the head or tipping the hat when they pass a Catholic church.

About ten years ago, a man—I will give him the fictitious name of J. Smith—was killed in an accident. I was sent for to console his wife who, having been abruptly informed by telephone of her terrible loss, was frantic with grief. It was then she told me what follows:

Two weeks ago her husband had been sent out from St. Louis by a manufacturing firm of soda fountains to a druggist in a town of southern Missouri, to sell him, if possible, an apparatus of their make. Unfortunately he arrived too late. An agent from another house was ahead of him and had the order from the prospective buyer well in hand. Mr. Smith did the best he could under the circumstances. He invited the druggist to his hotel and begged that he give him at least the satisfaction of looking over his large handsome catalogue of assorted soda fountains. To the evident displeasure of the prior salesman who was still in the store, the apothecary, although reluctantly,

agreed to do so, assuring Mr. Smith, however, that it would be of no use, as his mind was practically made up. The three men accordingly left the drugstore; the earlier salesman a little in advance of the other two who followed closely behind. Whilst on their way they passed a Catholic church. Mr. Smith, though on business bent and earnestly engaged in pressing home upon the apothecary the merits and the prices of his fountains, being a pious, thorough Catholic, lifted his hat, slowly and reverently, as was his custom, to the Blessed Sacrament. His companion took notice of it. "You are a Catholic, I see?" Yes, sir!" the latter replied. The druggist said no more. But that he was edified and most favorably impressed by the practical faith of his fellow Catholic the sequel proved. Not only did he kindly look over his catalogue, but to the deep chagrin of the rival agent, he placed his order for a fountain with Mr. Smith.

Now then, of what moral value is this incident? In regard to his bereaved wife, the recollection of it was soothing and reassuring. "From a sudden and an unprepared death, O Lord, deliver us!" says the litany of All Saints. We deprecate a sudden death for ourselves and for our loved ones because there is always a fear it may be an unprepared one. It was soothing and reassuring, therefore, to the family and friends of Mr. Smith to know that even on his business trips he cultivated those pious practices which whilst they flourish, prove that the heart is good and virtuous.

To the man himself the incident most certainly was not without spiritual significance. "Ave Maria!" said St. Bernard, saluting the Holy Virgin as he passed her statue. "Ave Bernarde!" the Holy Virgin from her statue saluted her client. But Mary, the Mother of God, in her love and gratitude, images her Divine Son, Christ. Is it not a fair inference then, that whenever and wherever a Christian on his journey through life, marks the church or chapel where Christ the Savior and Lover of Men resides and greets Him with a loving word or bow, He so infinitely good, will take cognizance of it and return the salute on the instant and especially at the hour of death, with interest?

It is not an extraordinary fact this, that the mother of Cardinal Vaughan, as we read in his life, from the day of her conversion until her death, spent an hour daily before the Holy Tabernacle; but it is an edifying fact and proves that she understood and grasped what is the very life of our Holy Religion, its heart and its soul. As a fruit of this devotion, Religion governed her life and taught her thus to value the things of this world that neither for herself nor for her children would she ever pray to God for merely temporal benefits but for spiritual blessings only; it was her daily prayer that if it were His Holy Will He would call her every child to serve Him in the choir or in the sanctuary. And God answered her prayer even as she desired; all her five daughters became nuns and six of her sons priests. It is also significant of her religious state of mind, that among the priests who served at one time or another as chaplains in Courtfield, the ancestral home of the Vaughans, she reverenced and preferred him above others who, no matter what his defects or how odd and capricious he might be, was pious and devoted to the Blessed Sacrament.

This truly Christian woman, we admit, was saintlike but not therefore exceptional in her piety, unless we hold that every member within the fold of Christ must

measure up to her zeal. For who has not known many such pious women in the past; who does not know many such mothers living today—every parish has them—who in spite of their multifarious duties find time to make the Holy Hour? And men too, who, toil-stained and weary, come without fail at the close of day to pay Jesus their daily visit? How many of us are there not who, if they would, could relate things as beautiful and edifying as are found in the lives of the saints, of fathers and mothers: about their regular life and incessant toil, their constant praying and much spiritual reading, their Mass-attendance and reception of the Sacraments, their devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Virgin Mary; Millet has immortalized for us the Catholic peasant in his "The Angelus." Would that a second Millet would give us a conventional picture of a Catholic mother or grandmother; he would represent her with a countenance resigned to and mellowed by the trials of life; with her right hand fingering the leaves of a well-worn prayerbook and her left entwined with the Rosary. But among these saintly men and women are found occasionally extraordinary souls whose love for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist is upon a higher plane and reaches the marvelous. These are the Saints.

That which makes the life of a saint such fascinating reading and that which beyond everything else we envy the saints for, is their wonderful, passionate love for Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Not that we find this love unintelligible. Indeed, there is

nothing more reasonable than that poor man, knowing what he is and Who Christ his Savior is, should love Him beyond bounds. We envy them because we cannot feel within our souls a love for God like theirs; a love which our reason understands but which our cold hearts aspire to in vain.

Poor earthly love! No one need envy another the friendship of the world or the love of any creature. Let the love amongst men be ever so true and holy it has its limits and it can never satisfy. Even if it be legitimate—call it parental, filial, fraternal, conjugal—it will be lacking in depth and fulness; and he who grounds his happiness solely upon it, will sooner or later be disappointed.

Abstracting from that love which seeks the creature in God alone, the Wisest of Men has pronounced judgment upon all earthly attachment, a judgment which history and experience daily confirm: "Vanity of vanities and all is vanity." The greatest minds of the world have accepted Solomon's verdict, and in speech simple or ornate have paraphrased its finality in words like those of Wolsey:

> "Had I but served my God with half the zeal
> I served my king, he would not now in mine age
> Have left me naked to mine enemies!"

The saints only are the truly wise. They fix their hearts on God alone. In so doing they love One Who is infinitely good; Whom they may love without stint or measure, and Who on His part, ever faithful and generous and true, is lavish with love in return.

No matter then how extraordinary and heroic the means to which these holy souls had recourse to prove what they felt for Christ; long vigils and prayers, sighs and tears, incessant and heroic work, martyrdom even —we can understand it all; we admire and glorify their heroism and regret that we cannot or will not imitate them. It is their love of God which urged them on and God's love for them which sustained their consuming zeal.

Our dearest Savior is never outdone; He overvalues every sacrifice made for Him a thousand times. Therefore, those to us interminable hours of the saints before the Blessed Sacrament were to them short and heavenly not irksome; their tears, sweet not bitter; their sighs not depressing, their vigils not exhaustive; but prayer and work alike, were accompanied with ineffable consolation. All love seeks to externalize itself. In proportion as their love for God and His love for them went on increasing, the seraphic fire within their bosom inflamed and consumed them; their hearts throbbing under the impulse of this mutual love and not able to restrain it, broke forth into those extravagancies of word and action: of childish effusiveness, of daring irreverence, of filial intimacies, which with brimming eyes we read about and contemplate and marvel at.

There are no regrets in the service of God excepting only in regard to those days and years which were lost, when through ignorance or sin the soul knew Him not. "Too late have I known Thee, too late have I

loved Thee, O Beauty! ever ancient, ever new!" was the one bitter regret of St. Augustine. This and this alone is the one lament of holy souls—to have lost a day when they might have loved God; for they know beyond what mere study or reason can tell them of the truth of the prophet's words: "For better is one day in Thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners." Psalm 83.

REGRETS.

"Had I but served...!" Wolsey.

'Twas autumn when an orchard through
The Master came on tribute bent;
The very sapling gave its due
And every tree its tariff kent.

'Twas to an autumn-mellowed man,
His life-fruit to appraise Christ came;
He found 'mid yellow leaf and tan,
An ashen fruit "Regret" by name.

Sighed he: "Had I but served!" "Well, then,"
Said Christ, "quick prune and work, to sue
The dying stock to life again,
The barren limb to fruitage new."

THE REAL PRESENCE.

The zealous Cardinal Mermillod, who died in 1892, was bishop of Geneva, and one of the great pulpit orators of our time. After preaching one day in his cathedral an eloquent and powerful sermon on the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, he spent half an hour as he was in the habit of doing every night, in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Upon this particular occasion deeming himself alone, for the congregation had left the church and the lights had already been extinguished, he gave vent to the ardor of his lively faith. As he was about to retire to his rooms he was beckoned by a lady at the Communion rail. "Your lordship," she said, "I was present this evening at your sermon on the Real Presence and I confess it made a powerful impression upon me but without convincing me, for I was bothered by a lurking suspicion that perhaps Your Grace was defending this dogma of your Church as a lawyer would his brief, that is, without a personal conviction of its truth. I therefore hid behind a pillar in order to observe your bearing toward the Blessed Sacrament as you would pass before it on your way from the sacristy to your room. Your sermon impressed me, your example has converted me. I now believe."

And the woman acted right; that is, she acted as reason most commonly suggests, when to confirm her

wavering belief she waited to compare the bishop's acts with his words. Our Savior Himself appealed to His works to convince His adversaries. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works."

It is true, the two cases are not exactly parallel. Christ Who proclaimed Himself the Son of God must confirm His preaching by signs, whereas the truth of the Real Presence could not be intrinsically affected by anything the bishop had said or would do; only as it touched his own and the welfare of others, was it obligatory upon him to see to it that his practice should square with his teaching.

"Is this a proof of an immortal nature," said Lord Byron to Coleridge, as he pointed to a drunkard lying in the gutter. "No, my Lord, but your question is," replied Coleridge. It is in a somewhat similar manner and upon a somewhat similar ground we may answer the skeptic who may chance to ask: "Are the arguments of your pulpiteers the only proof you can adduce for the Real Presence?" Not by any means. Look around you and see the thousands of worshipers, bishops and priests, artists, laborers, professional men, the literate and the illiterate, prostrate upon their knees in silent adoration before the August Sacrament and be convinced that they act upon conviction whose foundation does not rest upon any mere human evidence but upon proofs that are divine.

The incident related above has a lesson also for our Catholic people. Abstracting from the fact that no

one is justified in excusing his wickedness or unbelief upon the ground of the disparity that exists between the faith and practice of one or the other Catholic, or of a hundred Catholics for that matter, it still remains true, that if the love of God will not persuade them to see to it that their public life in church and in society be beyond reproach, the fear of scandal should.

FAITH IN THE CRUCIBLE.

Historians can vouch for little or nothing of what is related about Christianity in Greenland. Even the record of names of its bishops is incomplete and unreliable. All that we know is this, that Catholicism existed on the island from the eleventh to the sixteenth century and that it slowly died away after the death in 1520 of its last bishop. On account of its isolation and distance from the mainland of Europe, its inhospitable climate, and especially, because of the chilling effect more deadly than the arctic cold, of the so-called Reformation upon Christian faith, Greenland was lost to the Church. If then the following story cannot be verified, it will at least be accepted as not improbable by all those who know anything of the faith and love with which Catholics regard the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. The substance of the story I have taken from the book, "Sabbath Stillness," of Mgr. Kummel.

It was Christmas night in the eighties of the sixteenth century. For three months already upon Greenland, stark and dead, lay the somber pall of the Polar night, and six weeks more must yet elapse before the sun would again become visible.

In the southern part of the island some cottages few and far apart might be descried. From these huts

ST. MARGARETS SCHOOL

men and women were seen issuing at midnight wending their steps toward a little stone house in the distance. The cold was intense. The snow under foot yielded with a sound like the shivering of glass. The very breath as soon as emitted, fell in flakes to the ground. Before long, this little house, it was their chapel, was thronged with worshipers. Here in this place poor as Bethlehem's stable, in this cold, bare, ill-lighted place, they stood patiently and eagerly waiting; waiting for what? The sequel will show.

As the clock struck twelve, an old blind man was led to the altar upon which stood a little box. "It is Christmas night," he began, "that ever blessed night upon which Christ our Savior was born." He related the story of Christ's birth as recorded in St. Luke. Then he continued: "This chapel of ours, and this land of ours, once upon a time, had its crib, a real crib in which Christ, the Divine Infant lay; for there was a time—alas! fifty years have since gone by—when we had a priest and Holy Mass, and therefore a real Christmas, and when everyone who would, could see and adore the Infant Savior on the altar and receive Him into his heart. But from the day that the sectarians destroyed our churches and imprisoned and banished our priests, the peace and joy of Christmas are gone. However, we still have something to console us; we have a precious relic left us, namely, the linen upon which the Savior reposed." Thereupon, he opened the wooden box and carefully and reverently withdrew therefrom a Corporal, frayed and

yellow with age. One and all the worshipers immediately fell on their knees and with tears and sobs venerated the sacred linen, while at the same time, no doubt, they prayed Christ to pity their orphaned condition and to grant them a share in the gifts of His Incarnation. This then—the exposition of the Corporal—was their substitute for the Christmas Mass! To enjoy this meagre consolation they braved the ice and snow of a polar night! And we?

What in the physical order are the wonders of the dread and mysterious arctic zone in comparison with such an evidence of faith and love in the moral order! So it is; if, as the Psalmist says, the heavens declare the Glory of God, He is more glorified and wonderful still, in His saints.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE VERSUS THE CRIB.

In our Holy Church we have Christmas every day of the year; for Christ comes down on our altars daily and daily is laid in the crib of our hearts. As really and as humbly as He was hidden in the stable of Bethlehem, is He hidden in the tabernacle. Bethlehem reminds us of the tabernacle; the blessed tabernacle suggests Bethlehem and the crib. The holy altar is a Bethlehem and a Calvary at one and the same time. Therefore as the Passion of our Savior is represented pictorially in the Fourteen Stations, in the image of the cross and crucifix; His birth and the incidents of the Holy Night, and moreover, His Presence on our altars, and in our hearts in Holy Communion, is brought before our minds by that happy and beautiful invention of Christian piety, the Crib.

The old miracle and mystery plays of the Middle Ages have been superseded by our modern artistically elaborated theatrical shows; whether this evolution stands for progress will ever remain a mooted question. The picture of the little stable with its manger and the Infant Child, will never share the fate of the ancient Church plays; the regard for it is too deeply rooted in the hearts of the faithful to justify the fear that it will ever disappear entirely from our churches

and our homes. This, however, is unfortunately true, that the crib does not enjoy the popularity today which it enjoyed a hundred or even fifty years ago.

Aside from the countless toys and ingenious play-devices which claim so large a part of the attention of the children during Yule-tide, it is the Christmas tree especially that is disputing with the crib for first place in the hearts of young and old. To St. Francis of Assisi belongs the honor of having given us the first realistic crib: the Child Jesus bedded in a manger, with Mary and Joseph and the shepherds near by, and the sheep and the ox and the ass. He made the crib popular. For up to and through the Middle Ages the crib of Bethlehem was indeed represented, but not as a general custom, nor with any setting excepting some trees for a background. It was this circumstance of surrounding the simple Christmas manger with trees and then lighting them up with candles and decorating them with garlands, festoons and glittering baubles, in emulation of nature which, during this season of the year, crowns cedar and fir with snow and overhangs them with strings of ice-diamonds and ropes of winter pearls, which, little by little, brought the tree into prominence to the disadvantage of the crib. The tree was made more attractive from year to year; decked out with lights and gifts it led to the obscuration and finally to the exclusion of the crib from many a Christian home; this substitution of the tree for the crib was accelerated and accomplished just prior to and during the religious revolt of the sixteenth

century, when the sensual and the material was on the rise, and faith and the spiritual on the wane. Thus it happened that the Christmas tree ceased to be an appendage of the blessed crib; in its proud and glittering beauty the tree came to stand alone the cynosure of eyes.

The Christmas tree is, therefore, not of pagan origin; but neither has it the best of Christian origin to boast of. For is it not a significant fact that you will find the tree, but never the sweet and devotional crib in any excepting the Catholic Church, nor in any excepting a Catholic home? Still, since the fair arborial usurper is acclimatized amongst us we would not like to see it done away with, providing of course, the whole Christmas celebration does not center solely around it and stop there. For the Christmas tree too, brings joy to the home, and if rightly regarded, may be found to symbolize many a Christian truth. Any tree and therefore, especially the festive Yule tree, may teach us much. St. John in his Book of Revelation speaks of a tree wonderfully prolific, whose leaves even possess a healing virtue. The Book of Genesis makes mention of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. Then again we read, that the root of Jesse grew to a stately cedar, under the branches of which dwell all the nations. The Christmas tree typifies this cedar and is emblematic also of that other tree upon which man's salvation was wrought:

"That he who overcame by the tree,
Might also by the tree be overcome."

The gift-laden tree may represent the infinite goodness and bounty of God; its external splendor and enticing presents, the Christian soul in the state of sanctifying grace. Nevertheless, how far removed from the understanding of the child and of the majority of men are these symbolic Christian ideas which the tree may fairly be said to stand for; to the ordinary mind it speaks of the sensual only, of things to eat and to enjoy. It can never introduce the untutored and immature mind into the spirit of Christ in Bethlehem—the spirit of poverty, abnegation and sacrifice.

These, the hardest lessons for man to learn and to understand, the blessed crib readily and alone brings within the grasp of all. Moreover, what the crib teaches, it imparts silently, insinuatingly, and so effectually, that its lessons are never forgotten. It is the especial merit of the humble, unobtrusive manger, that it appeals instructively and soothingly to those who need solace and instruction most—the outcast, the poor, the widow, the orphan, the friendless; that it turns their minds and hearts from their present isolation and sorrow, to Christ and His Church, and upward to heaven, where alone true peace and happiness can be found. Only God knows how many thousands upon thousands of men have received their first lessons in Religion at the crib, and how many other countless thousands whom the "superior" wisdom of the world was hastening to temporal and eternal ruin, were reclaimed to soberer thought and a Christian life, by the

recollection of what they had seen and learned at the poor stable of Bethlehem.

Would to God every home and every church had its sweet, beautiful, devotional crib! Next to the figure of the cross and the crucifix, no sermon, no book, no picture, speaks so eloquently of God's infinite love for man and inculcates those fundamental Christian virtues of detachment, charity, prayer and purity, so clearly and so persuasively, as the representation of the crib of Bethlehem.

FORTY HOURS.

The fervent delight with which the Forty Hours is taken up annually in all our churches, from the great cathedral to the small country chapel; the eagerness and rapidity with which this devotion has spread over the whole United States, but particularly, its power of attraction in drawing the multitudes, saint and sinner alike, to the feet of Jesus, to Confession and Holy Communion; can be explained only upon the ground that some special interposition of God's infinite mercy is here at work.

It is related in the life of the saintly John N. Neumann, fourth bishop of Philadelphia, that at a diocesian synod in 1852, he proposed to his priests the question whether or not it were feasible to introduce, what until then had never been tried in the United States, the devotion of The Forty Hours. None of his priests, not even the oldest, nor the wisest, nor the most zealous, favored the idea. It was their opinion that in a country made up largely of non-Catholics, the Blessed Sacrament during so long an exposition, might be dishonored, rather than honored, and that where the Catholics were so few and poor, worshipers could not be found and if found, could not afford the time to make up the forty hours of adoration.

It is more conducive to the honor of God not to have the Holy Exposition at all, they argued, if for

many hours during the day, the church, as a matter of course, will remain unvisited. The holy bishop, however, was not convinced. Bent upon what proved to be an inspiration from heaven, one night after a laborious day, he was working late by candle-light upon a plan of exercises suitable for the Forty Hours. Exhausted, he fell asleep. After a while he was aroused from his slumber by the smell of smoke and a sensation of heat. Lo and behold! he found that the candle had set fire to and consumed all the papers on his desk, excepting one; and that one was the schedule of exercises he had worked out for the Forty Hours.

This wonderful occurrence was to him a sign from heaven; he hesitated no longer. In the Church of St. Philip Neri the Forty Hours Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was accordingly opened publicly for the first time in the United States. Its success from the very beginning was simply marvelous. The people from the parish and all over the city, the laborer and artisan, dust-begrimed and weary, the mother despite her fatigue, the young and the old, streamed to the church and never an hour passed of the forty, but a throng of worshipers were present to do our Savior homage.

The first public Forty Hours in the church of St. Philip Neri was solemnly opened by the saintly bishop himself. He presided at all its exercises and spent as much time before His Eucharistic God as his manifold duties would permit. Indeed, it might be said of him what was said of St. Clement Hofbauer, the apostle of Vienna, that after the inauguration and spread of this

salutary devotion in his diocese, Bishop Neumann made it a point to visit, as far as possible, every church in which the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was in progress. We read of St. Benedict Labre, the holy pilgrim, that he spent nearly all the time of his earthly exile, especially whenever he sojourned in Rome, by following up and attending the Forty Hours as they opened and closed without interruption, in one or another of the many churches of the City of St. Peter and the Popes. The Catholic people in their turn, emulate the example of the saints and servants of God. Their devotion to this august Sacrament is admirable. They have their own beautiful fervent ejaculations with which to greet Jesus. Ardent words of salutation, begotten in their own hearts, or treasured there as heirlooms from their pious ancestors: "May the most holy Sacrament of the Altar be praised and exalted by me and every creature now and forever!" "O, good Jesus! O, great and most amiable Good!

"O Sacrament most holy,
O Sacrament divine,
All praise and all thanksgiving
Be every moment Thine!"

FAITH, TRIED AND ATTESTED.

For the substance of the following, we are indebted to the book, "The Benedictine Pioneers in Australia." The Very Reverend Father O'Flynn was the first priest in Australia supplied with full ecclesiastical faculties and the only priest in that continent in 1817. Bigotry and intolerance prompted the English government to expel him. Upon the morn of his expulsion he assembled the Catholics for the last time in the house of a Mr. William Davis, one of their number, in Sydney, to celebrate Mass. Either on account of his hurried forced departure, or moved by divine inspiration, he left the Blessed Sacrament in a cedar tabernacle, hidden away in the house of the said parishioner.

During the space of two years, day in, day out, to this dwelling the Catholics, as many as could, were wont to come to visit and adore their Hidden God; to this little room, which was cared for and regarded as a sanctuary and wherein a lamp was kept constantly replenished. It is as edifying as it is instructive to contemplate these men in exile, gathered around the Bread of Life, bowed in mute adoration; no voice in evidence, but the silent one of faith; with not a priest within six thousand miles to keep their faith alight or to extend to them the pledge of pardon and of peace. In their darkest hour, when they needed comfort most,

these simple souls circled round the Blessed Sacrament, praying that a priest might be sent them and that they might not die without the last rites of the Church. After two years of waiting, in 1819, their prayers were heard. Two priests were sent them, who in that thrice blessed Australian house found the Sacred Species still incorrupt. Upon the site of Mr. Davis' house, now stands the imposing Cathedral of St. Patrick, Sydney.

In studying this incident so creditable to the first Catholics of Australia, the question arises, how did they come to possess such a lively faith? Were these pioneers the flower of Catholic European parishes? We will evade the question by simply stating that the majority of the early Catholics in the antipodes a hundred years ago, were banished thither by the English government for cause; that cause and the stigma connected with it, was grounded upon the sole accusation that the victims loved their Church and their country too aggressively. Most of them were political exiles from a country where the name Irish and Catholic are almost synonymous. This, however, of itself, will not account for the religious zeal of the pioneers in question. One may be a good Catholic and still not possess that fervency of faith exhibited by these Australian settlers toward the Blessed Sacrament during the years they were without a priest. For surely, not even in Catholic Ireland and Spain and France and Italy; nor in the Catholic provinces of Germany and Switzerland, are the people wont to

assemble in a body around their Blessed Savior in the Eucharist, excepting under obligation and at times of public worship.

The story from Australia, however, is not without precedent. In countries where, on account of persecution, priests were few and hampered in their ministry, or as in the genesis of the Catholic Church in aboriginal Australia and America, the settlers saw a priest only once or twice a year; in the one case, as in the other, the men and women who had been brought up in the faith, were extraordinarily appreciative of what meagre opportunities they had for hearing Mass and receiving the Sacraments. The missionary records are full of examples of the heroic efforts our forefathers made to meet the priest in order to have their children baptized, to have a chance to go to Confession and Holy Communion and the privilege to assist at Mass. Thirty, forty, fifty miles, they would travel in lumbering carts, over all kinds of roads, in fair and stormy weather, to the church or chapel or settler's house, in order to make their "duty." It is the well-instructed in their faith and those who have been familiar with its blessings from their childhood, who, when they are without a priest, feel most keenly the lack of his ministrations. The proverb is as true in its application to spiritual as to temporal gifts; what we possess in abundance we do not value. The familiarity with privileges leads so easily to a disesteem and a neglect of them. It is therefore, not an unusual example, to find among the faithful living far away from a church,

many who in love and devotion for the Sacrifice of the Mass and eagerness to receive the Sacraments, will put to shame their more favored brethren. To live within the very shadow of the church and within the sound of its bells is a privilege indeed, but one not always duly appreciated. In the designs of His loving Providence, this may be one reason why God permits persecution to afflict His Church periodically; namely, that by withdrawing the priest from his people for awhile and making the reception of the Holy Sacraments difficult or even impossible, the faithful may learn and feel by sad experience, what their Religion means to them in life and in death. It is seldom that we value as we ought these ineffable gifts from heaven in times of peace, when we can receive them without difficulty and as we please. "Oh, dear mother! I had the happiness today of assisting at Mass and receiving Communion!" wrote a young man, who during the World-War, had for months been immured in the trenches. You would infer from the fact of his making this bit of news the burden of his letter, that he had never or but seldom enjoyed the privilege before. He is safe at home now. I wonder whether he still so esteems the privilege of attending Mass by frequently assisting at it in his parish church, where it is said daily.

Certainly, not until the hour of death will we fully realize what our Holy Religion has been to us, and never until then, what more it might have been to us if our faith and devotion had been livelier.

"I will not leave you orphans," said our Savior in His last discourse to His disciples. What Christ promises is always superabundantly fulfilled. Neither the trials nor accidents of life, neither the machinations of wicked men, or of evil spirits, can orphan us if we seek out our Blessed Savior and commune and establish companionship with Him in the Blessed Sacrament.

COME AND SEE!

"And other sheep I have that are not of this fold." John 5:16. These "other sheep" of which Christ speaks, come back into the true fold, if at all, by ways diverse and oftentimes wonderful.

The Reverend Zachary Werner, romantic poet and dramatist, with no strong moral or religious moorings to steady him, drifted early in life into and continued for years in excesses of all kinds; he was converted to the Catholic Church in the city of Rome in 1810. His conversion was thorough, for never after as a Catholic did he fall back, even for an instant, into those evil courses which he had pursued before. On the contrary, so exemplary was his life as a member of Holy Church, so marked with penitence and zeal, that working in collaboration with St. Clement Hofbauer in the salvation of souls, he with his holy master, by word and example, converted so many sinners and produced such extraordinary fruit, that they were deservedly and commonly called: "The two great apostles of Vienna."

His non-Catholic contemporaries, to hide their chagrin and to diminish the lustre of his conversion, ascribed it to the effect of the poetic charm with which history and tradition envelope the sense of Catholic ritual and ceremonial. "It was the ritual of the

Church," they said, "and not her dogmas that converted him."

Supposing now we grant this; what of it? Man has a will, a heart and an intellect. The Church appeals to each in turn and to all together, and fully satisfies every faculty of the soul. Her authority and precepts appeal to the will; her aesthetic influences touch and move the heart; her truths attract the intellect. But whether it is the heart or the intellect which is first interested, or the will, the one captivated faculty will engage the others. If, as in the case of St. Augustine and Cardinal Newman and Orestes A. Brownson, it was the intellect which first surrendered to the claims of the Church, the intellect with the grace of God, moved the will, and the heart was touched by the mind and the will. It matters not therefore, how a man approaches the Church; but this is what matters, and it is the distinctive proof, not only of every true conversion, but also of the sanctity of Holy Church, that he who crosses her threshold is ever after a better, a transformed man. The Jew however, is seldom, if ever attracted to the Church, either by her attributes of authority, or her notes of unity and sanctity; either by the beauty and symbolism of her ritual or her glorious history. If he is converted and brought within her pale, it is by a miracle as was Alphone M. Ratisbonne, or as the Ven. Frances M. Libermann, through some miraculous interposition.

Christ in the tabernacle is the Good Shepherd, ever on the watch, seeking out His sheep that are astray.

The number of wonderful conversions wrought through the Holy Eucharist is known to God alone. Few priests but have met souls to whom the truths of our Holy Church were as a sealed book, and others to whom her doctrines about Confession, the Veneration of the Saints, about abstinence and fasting, were hard and repellant sayings, who yet upon entering a Catholic Church in which the Blessed Sacrament was kept in reserve, felt a strange overpowering awe for which they could not account, and the conviction: "How terrible is this place; this is no other but the house of God and the gate of heaven."

I need but recall an incident in the life of Shelley. In 1822, a few days before he was drowned in the Gulf of Leghorn, he in company with Leigh Hunt, paid a casual visit to the cathedral of Pisa, whilst some religious service was on and the organ was playing. They were both profoundly impressed with the religious atmosphere of the place. "A truly, divine religion might yet be established," remarked Shelly, "if charity were really made the principle of it." A foolish observation indeed, since charity springs from and must be grounded in and nursed by religion. But nevertheless, who will not fail to see in this spontaneous avowal of the one, and assented to by the other, an evidence of that mysterious attraction of the Real Presence, of that Magnet of Souls, always at work, silently, sweetly, beckoning souls that are astray, but which these twin rebels against all Revealed Religion passed off with an illogical "if."

Goethe, born of Lutheran parents, was baptized and brought up a Lutheran; in the course of his life he gave up his Protestantism and all belief in the supernatural, and died a nature-worshiper, a pagan. But he was a great poet and a man of genius. Poetry in its highest flights strives to express the true and the beautiful. It is not surprising then, to find in his works, many a truthful and beautiful tribute to Holy Church. Even in the austere and bigoted Milton, this contrast appears—a contrast between his convictions and his sympathies: the Puritan Milton, who hated the Hierarchic Church and all forms of ceremonial worship, as against the poet Milton, who describes in stately and fervid lines, the very symbolism and external splendor of a Church and a worship which he detests.

Appended to the preface of Moehler's Symbolik is a note which says: "There is at Bingen on the Rhine, a beautiful little Catholic Church, dedicated to St. Roche, to which Goethe once gave an altar-piece. 'Whenever I enter this church,' he used to say, 'I always wish I were a Catholic priest.' In the great poet's autobiography we also find an interesting description of the extraordinary love for Catholic ritual and liturgy that had captivated his heart in boyhood." But let no one conclude from this that there was anything Christian about Goethe; the incident merely shows that every Catholic church is the House of God, and that it is not an unusual occurrence, for pagan, Jew or gentile, who may chance to cross the threshold

of one, to feel in an almost palpable way, the Divine Presence. However the poet may have been affected once upon a time by the church of St. Roche, no well-informed reader can misread the satirical invention about "The Festival of St. Roch," which the hoary infidel wrote for his "Journal on Art," when seventy years of age.

Equally pertinent to the subject at hand is the confession of Alexandrine de la Ferronays, the heroine in Mrs. Craven's "A Sister's Story," of what she felt when still a Lutheran, whilst assisting at Mass in the church St. Mary's of the Franks, Constantinople; "I received on that day one of those impressions of grace which leave behind them a deeper remembrance than any material things. I suppose that Mass at that time had the kind of effect upon me which the sun might produce on blind people."

It must have been a thrilling scene when the saintly Carmelite, Father Herman of the Blessed Sacrament, a converted Jew, at the request of Monsignor Affre, Archbishop of Paris, filled the pulpit of St. Sulpice and before a vast congregation of the intellectual élite of the French Capital, related the story of his conversion. Herman Cohen, the son of a rich Jewish banker of Hamburg, was brilliantly educated and as virtuoso on the piano was lionized in every capital of Europe. For years he had lived care-free of all that concerned religion and morality, the idol of the salons and drawing-rooms of France and Germany.

It was in 1847 that Prince La Moskowa begged Cohen to take his place in the choir at St. Valerie's Church, during the Friday May-Devotions and to accompany the children in their hymns. Without a thought of the mercy awaiting him, Cohen to oblige the prince, presided at the organ. And now, hear what happened: "At the moment of the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament," he says, "I experienced a sudden indefinable feeling of awe take hold of me. As the Host was lifted up for the adoration of the faithful, I felt as if some mysterious presence was forcing me to my knees. This phenomenon was repeated upon each subsequent Friday during the whole of the month of May and with increasing force; it seemed as if a great weight descended upon me and forced me to kneel, yea, to prostrate myself prone upon the ground and to adore." But, nothwithstanding that the finger of God was so clearly beckoning him, he was not immediately converted.

It was some time after and whilst still vacillating between abjuring Judaism and entering the Catholic Church, he went to the city of Ems to give a grand recital. The morning after the concert he attended Mass. It was then the mercy of God completed its work. "At the moment of consecration," he related, "I wept as I had never wept before. I was overwhelmed with bitter sorrow for my sins and a dread of Divine Justice. Uppermost in my soul, however, was an ardent desire for Baptism so that I might be permitted to receive Holy Communion, for I envied

those whom I saw communicate." The sequel was quick in coming. He was baptized in the month of August, 1847, and three years later entered the Carmelite Order.

As a zealous Religious, as the founder of the pious practice of the Nocturnal Adoration, as a fiery and indefatigable missionary, Father Herman spent himself in God's service in France, Germany and England, and died a martyr to charity as military chaplain attending the sick in the fortress of Spandau, in 1870.

COME YE APART!

"Come ye apart into a desert place, and rest a little." Mark VI:31.

The saintly Passionist, Father Dominic, who in 1845 received Cardinal Newman into the Catholic Church, in a quaint letter, playing upon the word "Littlemore," where the abjuration from Anglicanism of the distinguished convert was made, says: "Men are but too commonly inclined to connect the idea of a great event with the idea of some great place where they imagine it to have occurred. Sinai, whereon the law was given to Moses, is a large mountain, it is true, so also Jerusalem, where Solomon's temple was built, was a large city. But Bethlehem was a small town and Calvary a despicable place; here, however, the great mysteries of our redemption were accomplished."—

Newman-Ward

Yes, and we may add: Nazareth, where the mystery of the conception of Jesus took place, and where He dwelt from His childhood until His thirtieth year, is not even mentioned in the Old Testament nor by Josephus. Nevertheless, in spite of its insignificance, the village had yet the questionable distinction of being looked down upon with contempt by all Judeans. How strange then, that in Nazareth, a place without beauty, without honor, without history, Christ should become man!

As God favored the Scriptural Nazareth, He has favored many a Nazareth since, in all times and in many places. It is the hidden mountain shrine, it is the little country church, it is the quiet convent chapel, in which Christ and His Blessed Mother with predilection, choose to reveal themselves. Seldom in cathedral churches, but often in rural sanctuaries, is the mercy of God marvelously manifested.

In the cave of Subiaco St. Benedict received his mission; in the cave of Manresa St. Ignatius was made a soldier of Christ. What marvels were not the stones of the crumbling Portiuncula witness of! What wondrous words were spoken in the hearing of the walls of Paray-le-Monial! In the village church of Domremy, light and strength came to Joan of Arc; from the desolate altar of Ars, came apostolic vigor to its sainty curé; in the shadow of the tabernacle at Saint-Paillais, Eustelle, the village sempstress, became the Angel of the Blessed Sacrament.

The history of God's dealing with souls proves that far from the noise and tumult of the world, around some rural altar or in some quiet retreat, He loves to gather the poor, the humble, the childlike, in order to disclose to them His designs in their regard or His intentions concerning mankind in general. In an accommodational sense, any soul is free to apply to itself the words of Osee, the prophet: "I will lead her into the wilderness and I will speak to her heart." In those lone hours of the day, when the church is de-

serted, the loving soul all alone in vigil before the Blessed Sacrament, will receive unusual lights and solace and strength, and will taste and see how sweet the Lord is.

A PLEDGE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

"If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever." John VI:52.

It is not an unusual thing to hear it said that he or she from excessive grief or on account of some great disappointment, died of a broken heart. Such a death is deplorable. It is quite infrequent however, to hear that this or that holy man or woman died, not so much from the effects of a malady, as rather from the consuming fever of the love of God. Death from such a cause is enviable because it is thrice blessed.

Is not that a beautiful incident related in the life of the Reverend Francis X. Seelos, C.SS.R., who died in the odor of sanctity in New Orleans, 1867, according to which, when his religious brethren saw that his agony was being unduly protracted, they helped him to snap the thread of life and take his flight heavenward, by intoning a sacred hymn round his deathbed?

It was in the village Saint-Paillais, in June, the month of the Sacred Heart, of the year 1842. In her little cottage, poor as was the Holy House of Nazareth, Marie Eustelle Harpain was lying bedridden, sick unto death. Who was she? In the eyes of the world nothing more than a poor semptress, who all her life, early and late, had laboriously plied her needle and thread for her daily pittance. In the eyes of God, however,

she was a virginal soul, richly dowered with grace, resplendent with heroic virtue, and favored with an attraction and devotion toward the Eucharistic God so marvelous, as to merit for her the title, The Angel of the Blessed Sacrament.

Nigh unto twelve weeks now she lay upon her bed of suffering, unrelieved by those comforts and delicate attentions which wealth alone can supply. But then, she neither craved nor accepted what relief the world had to offer, for she found in the Bread of Angels a wonderful medicine which strengthened and consoled her and filled her with heavenly bliss.

Twice every seven days was Holy Communion brought her. For these two days only, she longed and lived; all others were erased from her mind. She, whose whole life had been a living lamp of the tabernacle, fed with sighs and tears of love, of seraphic prayers, of heroic resolves and works, consuming itself before Jesus under the sacramental veil, took notice only of every recurrent Sunday and Thursday, as the only days privileged in her regard. In her feverish eagerness to receive her Spouse and Savior, her sufferings, her privations, her poverty, all were forgotten; but not the interval which must elapse between one Communion and the next. To her loving heart these intervals grew more and more interminable. Therefore, did it happen time and again, that by a faulty arithmetic, her too eager reckoning overreached itself; and great was her disappointment when she was set aright and told that the boon she counted on for the

immediate day was anticipated and would be due her only on the morrow.

It was the 29th of June, the festival of SS. Peter and Paul. The saintly Eustelle had received her Savior as usual on Sunday. Two days had elapsed since then. Again the dying virgin, who was guided not by the calendar, but by the insatiable longing of her heart, anticipated by one day her ineffable privilege. It was Wednesday morning; she heard the village bells ringing in the festival of the Holy Apostles and in her love-delirious state mistook them for the sanctuary bells, the harbinger of the priest and Holy Communion. "Sister," she exulted, "haste and prepare; my Jesus is on the way! I hear the bells ringing!" "But it is not today that you are to receive," replied her sister. "This is only Wednesday." "Ah! I believed it to be Thursday," exclaimed Eustelle, and then relapsed into deep silence. She had received her death-blow. Her heart throbbing and pulsating with love could not bear up with the disappointment. A few minutes afterwards her agony was on and then, like a bird entrapped, she shook off her earthly trammels and winged her flight to heaven.

ST. MARGARETS SCHOOL

COME TO ME!

It was in the year 1508 or 1509. There was a procession of the Most Holy Sacrament in the church at Erfurt, in which Martin Luther, who at that time was still an exemplary monk, at least as far as appearances went, was asked to take part. Accordingly, vesting himself in his priestly robes, he acted as assistant to the celebrant Von Staupitz, the Vicar-General of the Augustinians. As had often happened to him whilst saying Mass, so now his proximity to Christ the Savior, filled Luther with such dread and terror that he could barely keep his place in line to the end. When the sacred function was over, he told Von Staupitz who was his superior, about this fright and commotion of soul and that it was so terrible as almost to drive him from the church. "Luther," his superior observed by way of reply, "that fear did not come from Christ; Christ does not terrify; on the contrary, He consoles." It was a sound and striking answer. No, Christ does not frighten and repel; He attracts and comforts. It is not astonishing that Luther's brethren in religion, unable to explain his ominous trepidation in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, concluded that there was some agency at work within him other than mere natural timidity or religious awe; that their so singularly troubled confrére was probably

possessed. And indeed, as against Calvin who was the cool, deliberate, methodical heretic, the assumption of diabolic possession is the only hypothesis which fits in with the mad career of the apostate friar to account for his paroxysms of rage and his tirades upon the Vicar of Christ and the Fathers of the Church.

What but the influence or domination of the evil spirit within the soul would keep away from Christ anyone who confessed His Divinity? St. Luke relates that at Capharnaum there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit who, when confronted by Christ, cried out: "Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth; art thou come to destroy us?" And St. Matthew tells about two men in the country of the Gerasens possessed with devils and exceeding fierce, who when Jesus came upon them exclaimed: "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, Son of God; art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

It is admitted that the most insidious and pernicious heresy that ever troubled Holy Church was that of Jansenism; and why? Because it cloaked its nefarious work with the mantle of piety. In the machinations of the evil spirit and wicked men, the plan of a direct or frontal attack upon the bulwarks of the Church was set aside; it had been tried too often and had always failed. To attack her defenses in the rear or on the flank might prove more successful. The plan of assault was worthy of the ingenuity of a plotting angelic mind. Christ had said: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of

Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

The words of the Savior are plain. His followers if they wish to possess a happy eternal life must approach and unite themselves to Him in Holy Communion. The subtle demon knew, it were foolhardy to explain away the sense of a command so obvious; but so long as he could deprive his dupes of eternal life by keeping them away from the Holy Sacrament for long intervals at a time or altogether, what difference would it make to his plans whether they accepted the words of Christ or not. A man may starve to death in either of two ways: by stubbornly refusing to eat or by keeping away from the table upon the ground that his stomach is not in condition. Of course, it is only a fool who would reason and act thus; but not more a fool, indeed not as much a fool, than the Christian who holds aloof from Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and refrains from receiving His most holy Body and Blood, upon the presumption that sinful man is not worthy to approach Infinite Purity. The sophism in this mode of reasoning, especially when the disparity between the All-Holy God and poor sin-stained man is drawn out by the unctuous tongue of a designing hypocrite, is not at once apparent.

Was there ever in the promise a greater saint than Mother Angelique, abbess of Port Royal, visited and befriended by the holiest woman of her day, St.

Chantal? And was there ever a body of religious more fervent and exemplary, than the community of Abbess Angelique? But Port Royal and its inmates came to an inglorious and terrible end because they allowed themselves, by the seductive reasonings of an emissary from hell, to become estranged from Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. They placed the Most Holy Sacrament at a distance from them and approached the Dearest Jesus with fear and trembling. Under the domination of a fearful error aggravated by a stubborn pride, they refused Him a welcome, Whose Flesh and Blood is the aliment of the Christian soul. The heresy that brought such spiritual and temporal ruin upon the Community of Port Royal is called Jansenism. Nothing contributed more to its spread than its affected reverence for the Sacrament of the Eucharist and its teaching that only an angel or the angel-like may dare presume to receive the Bread of Angels. Deep into the soil of every Christian land the Jansenistic error struck; so deep with such tenacious hold, that it has not been wholly eradicated even to this day.

The saintly Pius X, whose motto it was to restore all things in Christ, proved he was acting under divine guidance, when he sent out to the Christian World his decree on Frequent Communion. If his pontificate was to achieve the work he had set for it—to bring back Christian Life to its pristine fervor—no means could be so effective as familiarizing the faithful with the practice that prevailed in the days of the Apostles

and of the early martyrs, the practice of Frequent and Daily Communion.

On that ever memorable occasion in the synagogue of Capharnaum, when Jesus foretold the institution of the Blessed Sacrament and so many followers who found it a hard doctrine, left Him, He turned to the twelve and said: "Will you also go away?" "Lord," Simon Peter answered, "to whom shall we go?"

What a wealth of meaning there is in this reply of Peter! If we leave Thee whither shall we go? Yes, whither? If you are young and healthy and have means, the world will receive you for a time. But the poor sinner, who, as happened to the Prodigal, as soon as he has wasted his goods is rejected by the world, where will he go? And those whom the world has allured and seduced and then cast out, where will they go? The widow of Naim, and the blind and sick and poor and outcast, who will calm their hearts and still their tears? There is no one to whom the afflicted can go when the trials and sins of life are upon them and the fear of death; there is no asylum or refuge that will take them in, excepting Holy Church and He, the Christ and Savior dwelling upon her altars. "Come to me all ye that labor and are burdened and I will refresh you." If we leave Him what becomes of our faith and hope and our assurance of future happiness?

The only one who has always loved us and will always love us is our dearest Jesus. No man exists who does not feel a strong irrepressible desire and need, to be

loved. To quote the words of an ardent soul: "After all, is not love, even on earth, the sweetest treasure one can possess? If so, is it not most reasonable then, that to love Love Itself, must be the perfection of all sweetness and happiness for time and eternity?"

What privilege therefore, and what happiness, can surpass that of Holy Communion? By receiving Christ frequently we take the weight from the burden of life, the terror from the ordeal of death; we insure a welcome and a favorable sentence from the Divine Judge, and merit the love and friendship of Christ forever in heaven.

HER LAST COMMUNION

Mary Stuart's nineteen years of imprisonment under the sanguinary Elizabeth had closed in Fotheringay Castle, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 1537. At 6 o'clock on the morning of her execution she entered her oratory alone and kneeling before the little altar at which her chaplain had been accustomed to say Mass, she opened the gold bejeweled ciborium in which Pope Sixtus V had sent her a consecrated host.

Her chaplain having been forbidden to attend her, she was by special dispensation permitted to administer Holy Communion to herself by way of Viaticum in preparation for death. Not until the wintry morning of that fraughted day had dawned did she leave her oratory, whence, shortly after, she was led to the block. "As long as there shall be eyes or tears in this vale of misery," says her French biographer Caussin, "there shall be tears shed on the royal ashes of Mary Stuart, and the piety of the living shall never cease with full hands to strew violets and roses and lilies on her tomb." STRICKLAND.

Who but the blessed martyrs whom she emulated could describe what must have been the sentiments of that ill-starred queen in that lone chapel when face to face with her God she realized that within two hours she would stand before His dread tribunal! Prone upon the earth with what faith and fervor she must

have wept and prayed to Jesus to have mercy on her, to forgive her sins, to be favorable to her in her present hour of trial and at the bar of Divine Judgment; and how she must have thanked Him for deigning to visit her in her extremity, when kindred and friends and all the world had forsaken her!

But whatever her sentiments in that crucial hour in preparing to receive Christ for the last time, our faith and love in fitting ourselves for Holy Communion at any time should be as lively and fervent. The saints of God received Communion each time as if it were their last.

They received Jesus with a countenance aflame like that of a seraphim and with the light of a glorified soul in their eyes. We know what Holy Communion is; what an ineffable privilege to receive Christ into our hearts; but we also know that we seldom prepare ourselves as fervently for its reception as we so easily might. If we were assured that the morrow's Communion would be our last, no St. Paschal, no St. Aloysius, no St. Francis de Sales, could teach us either by word or example, how to prepare better. It were well to bear in mind that the infinite goodness of God has granted us this heavenly boon a definite number of times. This number which can never be added to, is being decreased by one each time we approach the Holy Table. The second last and very last Communion will come and we will not know it. Then as we have been wont to receive our Blessed Savior,—with neither more nor less fervor, certainly not with more,—

we will receive Him in the end. What a source of regret and sorrow, if the last welcome we gave that dearest and best of friends, was indifferent and lacking in faith and love! Death is only terrible if we make it so. If we have reason to fear death, there is no grace conceivable that can rob it of its terrors like a worthy Holy Communion. But if even our last Communion is lukewarm, and it will be so if those that preceded it were, how ashamed and grief-stricken and how affrighted we will be upon meeting Christ, our Judge, face to face in eternity!

It is not without its lesson to place in parallel columns the prayer which Mary Stuart extemporized at the time of her last Communion and that of a Saint who in the manner of saints, always prepared for Communion as if it were his last.

"O Domine Deus! speravi in te;
O care mi Jesu, nunc libera me.
In dura catena, in misera poena, desidero
Languendo, gemendo et genu flectendo
Adoro, imploro, ut liberes me!"

My Lord and my God! all my hope is in Thee
Oh, now, belov'd Jesus! come, deliver me.
In chains I am pining, in sorrow, in pain.
With sighs and with tears, on my knees, Thy blest Name,
I adore, and implore, deliver Thou me!

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water out of the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus! hear me.
Within thy wounds hide me.

Let me not be separated from Thee.
Defend me from the malignant enemy.
At the hour of my death call me,
And bid me come unto Thee,
That with Thy Saints I may praise Thee,
For all eternity. Amen.

BLACK OR WHITE?

It was in the seaport of Smyrna that once upon a time, the Rev. Alban Stolz, on his way to the Holy Land, saw a little armless and legless African boy slowly pushing his way along through the narrow streets in the fetid Turkish quarter, begging for alms. The priest, unsolicited, dropped him a coin. At the unexpected gift the little cripple stunned with amazement eyed him in mute surprise for a full minute and then in shouts of thanks and blessings poured forth his gratitude upon his benefactor until he was nearly out of sight. Although the priest understood not a word the negro boy was uttering, his blazing eye and his expression of countenance more eloquently than words, revealed the sentiments he was struggling to express: sheer astonishment at what to him seemed so incredible that a well-dressed stranger, a white-faced traveler, a European, should deign to notice him at all, who was only a poor black boy; and gratitude, that unsolicited, he should condescend to give an alms to a friendless cripple.

It is a touching incident no doubt, but an incident also to cover us with confusion. Will not the screams of thanks of many a helpless Smyrna waif, echoing and re-echoing in our soul for a trifling alms we chanced to bestow, confound our callous indifference toward the goodness of God in our regard? Spiritually sick

and wounded and mutilated along the highway of life we are languishing, when our dearest Saviour chances by. Looking with compassion on our want and misery, He helps us, not with some trifling alms, but with an infinite gift, the gift of Himself in the Most Blessed Sacrament. But alas! the little Moorish Smyrna beggar was more grateful a hundred times for the few pennies he received than we Christians are for the inestimable gift of the very Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion!

"If the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots, you also will do well when you have learned evil." Jeremias XII 23. The Ethiopian cannot indeed, change his skin, but for all that, in the sight of God many a black shall be adjudged white and many a white, black. If even in common speech, ingratitude is called "black," then tell me, between that Moorish boy, and yourself, who is the white and who the black?

THE SMYRNA BOY

I

'Twas in the fetid Turkish quarter
Of Smyrna's boothéd space;
A waif, legless, held things to barter;—
A wight of Moorish race.
"Poor me," wailed he;
"Oh! pity me."

II

Nor prayers nor trifles of the pleader,
Nor face so thin and wan,
Could move the crowd. Then was I eager
To dole the hapless one;
With gift to cheer
The hapless one.

III

Spake wonder from the little gazer;
My gift beyond his ken.
His heart was like a glowing brazier
For me, an alien;
Of burning thanks,
To me, alien.

IV

That I a stranger, white, should linger
To gift him, black and poor!
E'en now chides me the grateful singer;—
Not he, I am the Moor.
He is the White,
And I the Moor.

V

This other Moor by other danger
Quite mutilate, I know;
Help came from a great Heav'nly Stranger
Who found him prone and low.
Nor Stranger thanked,
He prone and low.

VI

The wretch seemed a reluctant taker
Of gifts divinely sent.
How would the Smyrna boy his Maker
Have thanked for such godsend!
For each godsend
Have thanked!

VII

Our God Himself, the Gift and Giver!
Think what it means, O Soul!
The Moor will shame who would deliver
To God an ingrate's toll;
Who would deliver
To God such toll.

The Savior once said to St. Patrick: "Go and prepare that man to die." St. Patrick went and prepared the man for death. When the moment of death had come for the sick man, the saint saw the soul depart from the body. Three times before taking its final leave, the soul returned to embrace and kiss the body a last farewell, and each time with greater hesitation, with greater relutance and indescribable anguish. "What does this mean, Lord, this reluctance and anguish of the soul on leaving its body?" "That soul," said the Lord, "was sorry to leave its body, because that body had housed it so reverently and so worthily."

LADY GREGORY.

Part One.

This, of course, is a legend and nothing more. But as Count de Maistre has remarked, there is always this in favor of a Christian myth, that it is chaste and useful and often sublime. It is the dramatic truth which has its worth and effect independently of the literal.

In regard to the legend in question what matters it whether St. Patrick did or did not hear and see what it relates? It is not the shell we are to stop at; we are to look for the kernel. The imbedded truth is this that the body as the habitation of the soul and as the temple of the Holy Ghost, must be kept free from all defilement; if kept clean and "swept and garnished," the soul besides that anguish which is inseparable from

death, for death is a punishment, will feel an added pain but of another kind, a bitter-sweet pain, not of course, because it is leaving earth for heaven, but because it must separate from and leave its faithful companion behind. The fervent, loving soul, ever fearful of offending God and eager to possess Him, longs indeed to be dissolved, because whilst time lasts there is no other way to be with Christ; but united to Christ in heaven it looks forward yearningly to the day when it will be reunited to the body from which it is separated with reluctance.

There is then something beautiful and true in this mountain legend, all the same. The soul and body together work out their one inseparable destiny for better or for worse. As we can imagine a soul loathing its body if through its instrumentality it has wallowed in carnal sins, so also, is it conceivable, that the soul will love and reverence its body which by daily acts of abnegation and sacrifice it has fitted for worthy companionship hereafter. What then must be the reverence and affection of that soul and body for each other who have often,—weekly, daily even,—received and welcomed their Blessed Lord and God into their house; in having welcomed the Saviour whose flesh and blood nourishes the original life of all purity and is the pledge of eternal life to come? And how pleased on His part must our Saviour be with a soul and body nourished, rejuvenated and transformed with this bread from heaven. The happiness of the soul separated from the body will lack something of its perfection

until soul and body are reunited again on the day of judgment. In view of this fact the sanctified soul might indeed, with reluctance, bid farewell to the body, its faithful companion and temple of the Holy Ghost; but it is an anguish which is mellowed and sweetened by the prospect of that blessed reunion which Christ foretold when He said: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

Part Two.

THE PASSING SOUL.

According to the legend given above, St. Patrick saw the soul depart from the body. Every legend conceals some truth and the one just related is more akin to truth than seems apparent upon first reading. That anatomist who denied the existence of a soul because he had never found a trace of it in dissecting the human body, was a scientific fool of a superlative degree, for none but a fool would seek to find a soul in a corpse.

We affirm that not only St. Patrick but also every priest and every intelligent observer has seen the soul leave the body and leave it reluctantly. It was Doctor Johnson, if we are not mistaken, who relates that Hermann Boerhave, Professor of Medicine and Ophthalmology at Leyden and the most famous practitioner of his time, as his end drew near, said to a friend who visited him: "What greater evidence do I want to prove the separate existence of the soul and that it

does not die with the body but lives on, than the evidence which my present condition affords? You see me propped up in this armchair, for my legs refuse me further service. But although my body is already more than half dead, my soul is as normal and active, perhaps more active, than ever; my poor, old body is over-matured and ripe for the grave, but my soul is as vigorous today as it was in the years of my prime."

Who is a stranger to this phenomenon? Who, that has attended friend or stranger on his deathbed, has not seen the soul gradually withdrawing from the body? The extremities first grow cold, the hands and feet become numb, the organs of sight and hearing impaired; speech is difficult, and the heart throbs slowly and more slowly until finally it stops. But until the last gasp, the soul, reluctantly forsaking one outpost after another, remains active and alert in its citadel of the mind. As a candle burnt to its socket and about to expire, flares up once and again, but each time more languidly and with a smaller tongue of flame, so body and soul, struggling against the inevitable, express the anguish of the coming separation by many a passionate embrace; the flush on the face, the moving lip, the flash of the eye afire with intelligence, prove it. When the body to all outward appearance is dead, then only is the thread of life snapped with one spasmodic tremor, and soul and body are torn from each other. "He was conscious to the end!" the bystanders will remark. If they would only reflect what their remark implies, then the Mountain Legend would be of profit to them.

For it teaches that the soul is immortal, that the body is not, and why. That soul and body will be reunited again, and when. That after the Resurrection of the Dead their fate will be one and inseparable, and what that fate will be. Few men, however, will pursue this sequence of thought. It was the same Boerhave, quoted above, who as he was looking down from a balcony of the hotel at Ranelagh Gardens upon the promenade below where a jostling crowd of hilarious, frivolous, dissipated tourists were disporting themselves, remarked: "Not one in that brilliant assembly but is afraid to go home and think; his thoughts would be too disturbing when alone."

SAINT BARBARA

In the year 1910 there came a sick and footsore wanderer to St. Louis to die. I say, to die, because with the burden of age and the grip of aggravated jaundice upon him no premonition was necessary to convince him that his end was nigh. He was a bachelor of Austrian birth, and so quiet and unobtrusive in his ways and behavior, that in all probability he had never attracted a friend nor made an enemy. It was his lack of aggressiveness and not so much because he was a stranger which caused him without making any inquiry, to enter the first hospital that met his sight. This institution happened to be an Old Folks Home and hospital combined, under strictly Protestant auspices. On account of its sectarian character, but chiefly for the reason that the Catholics of St. Louis are amply provided with hospitals of their own, a priest had seldom if ever a call to cross the threshold of the home in question.

To this place then, so alien to his faith, the friendless stranger called me to administer to him the last rites of the Church. What struck me in the patient was the fact that his means were just sufficient to see him through to the end which was not far off, and his absolute child-like resignation to God's Will. After having done for him what I could I expressed to him

my surprise that he had chosen to come to this Refuge where, though there was no regulation forbidding the visit of a priest, a Catholic might die without one through the ignorance or forgetfulness of the attendants. "Well father," he replied, "I am a stranger in this city and knew no better and moreover, I never feared God would forsake me in my last hour. It is now nearly fifty years ago since I left my home in the old country for America. When I was about to bid my mother good-bye she, before giving me her last blessing, told me to get on my knees and solemnly promise that I would never let a day pass without a prayer to St. Barbara for a happy death. I have kept the promise faithfully."

This is the simple story of the man whom I attended; who lived a Catholic and died with all the consolations of Religion because, according to his avowal and conviction, he had been faithful to a little prayer. The incident is as touching as it is wonderful and bears out what the saints say: "God is so infinitely good that anything will please and satisfy Him providing it be constant." The celebrated French poet Lamartine ascribes his conversion and his return to the faith of his fathers to a couplet he could not rid himself of which his pious mother had indelibly impressed upon his mind:

"Thou God of my childhood
Be my God at life's end!"

The blind man from Jericho when he heard that Jesus was passing by cried out vehemently and continuously:

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" and when rebuked, only cried out the louder: "Have mercy on me!" Our Lord heard him and restored his sight. Never a soul astray but was led from darkness to light and was saved, if, as the blind man, it cried incessantly for sight or prayed for light as did the distinguished English convert in his immortal lyric:

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
Lead Thou me on!

But beyond and above all prayers short or long, if you wish to be blessed in life and to secure a happy death, none has so attested itself as the "Hail Mary." Take this prayer with you through life as a remembrance from your Holy Mother the Church, say it faithfully, and you will find that its sweet appealing burden, "Pray for us now and at the hour of our death!" will be verified. "An angel first breathed it on earth, and it is oftenest uttered by those whose lives are most like angels. Ave Maria! Happy they who speak and hear it the last of earthly sounds."

THE PRAYER OF LAMARTINE.

"O Dieu de mon berceau
Sois le dieu de ma tombe!"—Lamartine.

Prayer:
"O God, who form'st me in the womb,
And with a rite auspicious
Heav'n-childest me; be of my tomb,
That childing God propitious!

'Twas formally I once was styled,
An angel like, a Christian;
Had I so died a chrisom child,
This claim no fear would question.
With benisons my cradle lone,
Rocked to an angel's crooning;
Oh, that that cradled child had known
God, e'en to its entombing!

In borrowed phrase so read my shame;
'Twas in Armida's bower,
I squared to Lesbian Rule, by name,
My lost baptismal dower.

The puling infant in its bed,
Weeps tears with sunshine blending;
Ah! bitter drops and scald' I've shed,
For this my life, past mending.

Then words long lost came from a grave,
With faith and hope full-pendent;
An earnest pray'r my mother gave,
To help me die repentant:
"O God! Thou of my cradle's weal,
When low, so low, sick-lying;
If I have strayed from childhood's leal,
Come child me when I'm dying."

A WEATHER VANE

Cast a feather to the breeze and you will be able to determine the direction of the wind.

The Rev. P. McCarron who died July 21, 1917, had been pastor of St. John's Church, Bradford, Ill., for more than a decade of years. The writer of these lines had the sad pleasure of spending with him what proved to be Father McCarron's last Sunday on earth. His hospitality was without stint or measure, and much credit to him for a virtue that has always been prized by the Church as the very handmaid of Christian Charity. But what struck the visitor to Bradford beyond even the generous hospitality of the rectory, was the scrupulous neatness of its church, sanctuary and sacristy, the lavish richness of the vestments and of the altar and church appointments, and particularly, the edifying behavior and perfect discipline with which troops of well-dressed altar-boys, ranging in age from six to eighteen years, Sunday after Sunday, served the priest at the altar. In fact, the one great attraction of the town is the Catholic Church with its well-kept grounds and its tasteful arborial setting. It is evident that the good priest's heart and soul were given to his parish and to the one ambition to build a house that would do honor to God and His Church. If you

seek his monument enter St. John's Church and look around you; you will be convinced that to Father McCarron may be fairly applied the Psalmist's words: "The zeal of thy house has eaten me up."

After Mass on the said Sunday, the last of his life, I came over to the rectory and sat for awhile in the parlor reading a book. Just then the bulky Sunday edition of the daily news was brought in. The World War was in furious progress at the time, and the announcements in flashing headlines, of battles and casualties on land and at sea, gave the front page of the paper the appearance of a circus poster. The housekeeper, good Miss Dempsey, r. i. p., thought as a matter of course, *not only* that the news was eagerly awaited and would be eagerly read by the father *but also* that in his present condition it would help him to while away an hour or two. Accordingly, she called up the stairs: "Father, the Sunday paper has come, will I bring it up to you?" "No!" he replied; "as long as I cannot say my breviary I will not read the daily news!" Often and often since have I recalled and thought over these words and never without edification and spiritual profit.

It is the chip on the stream you gauge the current by. To fit the incident related above to your spiritual life, is very easy and very profitable. For example: You have no inclination nor will you make an attempt, even on Sundays, to read a spiritual book, although you have been urged to do so many a time from pulpit and altar platform; you answer apologetically, that

your eyes are bad, that you have an aversion to all reading, that you are too tired, that you have not the time. "He that is of God heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not because you are not of God." Abstracting from these words of our Savior—and mind you they imply a duty—do you never on Sunday read the daily paper? and at other times, the farm, the business, the daily journal; the political and social news? If you do where is your consistency?

Or apply the incident in a wider sense. You are struggling to make a living; you are striving to advance and make financial headway; you study your chance of success and are careful to avoid every step that may endanger or mar it; you are up early and late, out in all kinds of weather, enduring cold and heat, hunger and thirst; restlessly toiling and slaving, in order to lay by something against the exigencies of sickness and old age. But is there not another life coming, and that, a life without end? must not provision be made for that life more than for this? If then in all that concerns the life to come, that is, in all that regards your spiritual interests, you act languidly and half-heartedly, what becomes of your sense of honesty and truth? You would not miss a business engagement or even some social or political appointment excepting for the gravest reason, yet you omit your stated appointments with God, your stated prayers morning and night, without excuse; you miss upon a slight pretext and without scruple, the greatest engagement upon earth that can bind and honor and benefit you, the

Sunday Mass, when the congregation of which you are a member, in union with its priest, appears as one body before God to offer Him the Holy Sacrifice.

Your children and dependents learn from your example habits of thrift and industry. But what in regard to their souls, to their happiness of being sons of Holy Church, to their privilege of receiving the Holy Sacraments, do they learn from your words and works? "Father," said the young daughter of a wealthy buggy manufacturer of Columbus, O., "why does mother go so much oftener to Holy Communion than you?" Yes, why? Your conscience oftentimes asks the question; your priest would also like to know the reason; God on judgment day will know the reason. It is because you and I, all of us, act so circumspectly and providently in matters of less importance, and so frivolously and hazardously in matters of greater importance, that our Savior said in Luke xvi: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." But He also said: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. vi.

THE MASS IN SPIRIT.

Nearly every Catholic can explain what is meant by Spiritual Communion. According to the Catechism of the Council of Trent, they are said to receive the Holy Eucharist in spirit, "who," inflamed with a lively 'faith that worketh by charity,' participate in desire, of this celestial food, from which they receive if not the entire, at least very considerate fruit."

Just so in a similar way, a Catholic inflamed with a lively faith that worketh by charity, may attend in spirit and participate of the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, whenever circumstances of time or place or condition make it impossible for him to assist thereat in person. As he can receive Holy Communion spiritually so also can he assist at Holy Mass spiritually.

Transporting themselves in mind to some church or other, the traveler, the sick, the aged, the feeble, by following up the Holy Mass attentively and devoutly from their prayer-books, may unite themselves with the priest and the faithful in the offering up of the Great Sacrifice.

The greatest spiritual deprivation for the priest as for the Catholic layman is the loss of Holy Mass. Many a priest stricken with blindness would not allow even

such an affliction to hinder him in exercising his august privilege. He would memorize some particular Mass, as for example, the Votive Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and say it whenever possible.

What the faithful are advised to do in their way whenever they are hindered in attending Holy Mass, the priest does also; he offers up Mass spiritually when he cannot say it any longer actually.

A beautiful and touching example to the point is related by Father Neville of Cardinal Newman.

"According to the custom of Cardinals he said his own private Mass in a private chapel, and always as early as convenient to others; for the last time, the Christmas Day before he died, after which Feast he always declined to say Mass himself from fear of an accident. Sight and strength had already very greatly failed him, and he feared lest he should overbalance in taking the chalice. Reverence forbade such a risk. Nevertheless he learnt by heart a Mass of the Blessed Virgin and a Mass of the Dead. One or other of these masses he repeated daily, wholly or in part, and with the due ceremonies, for the chance that he hoped for, since his sight and strength varied, that with the brighter sunlight of the spring he might some day find himself in condition to say Mass once again. He was determined, he said, that no want of readiness on his part should cause him to miss the opportunity should it occur. This preparation became to him the great pleasure of the day, both from what he could look forward to in hope, and also from the reverence that

filled him by the solemnity of the words and different actions. This reverence would sometimes be manifest in his face and voice, and sometimes he would give expression of it by word to those who assisted him. He continued this preparation until within two or three days of his death, August 11, 1890."

The hoped for opportunity to say Mass never came.

To him who knows what the Holy Mass is there is nothing surprising in the devotion of the illustrious Cardinal.

The Holy Mass is the heart and soul of our Holy Church, the source of her spiritual life; this becomes evident when we study the relation that exists between the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass are one and essentially the same, for on the cross as in the Mass, it is Christ who is Priest and Victim. Therefore, the Catholic Church knows but one Sacrifice, the Bloody sacrifice of Mount Calvary, renewed daily in an unbloody manner on our altars. The Sacrifice of the Cross is the one, great central sacrifice, standing single and alone, because it is par excellence, the world-sacrifice, the merits of which can neither be increased nor decreased. It is the one absolute sacrifice, in the sense that solely through it the redemption of the world was accomplished once and for all times; therefore all other sacrifices and means of grace are fruitful only in relation to it; what merits they convey to us they in the first instance draw from the fountain-head, Calvary.

On the cross, Christ wrought the redemption of all men, no doubt; but the application of its fruits was then only begun and is to be continued to the end of time, through the Holy Sacraments and especially through the Holy Mass.

On the cross, Christ merited the salvation of men in principle only, and what He there merited is being applied to every soul that comes into the world; particularly to those of the household of the faith. It is not without meaning, that the Holy Mass is always said at the foot of the crucifix, for the Mass draws its healing waters from the cross. Christ's oblation on the cross was the sacrifice of redemption and impetration, it merited all but applied nothing; the Mass, however, is the sacrifice of application and of sanctification, it merits nothing but applies all. Hence it is that St. John in the Apocalypse beheld before the throne of God "a Lamb standing as it were slain," continually making intercession for man.

Quoting the Rev. C. C. Pise who quotes it from Tanner, I subjoin a very beautiful and original illustration of the Mass of the learned and saintly Father Laynez, S. J. This illustration I will place in one column, and my adaptation of it to the Mass, in another.

Father Laynez said: "Suppose a king desired to institute an annual commemoration of some great victory; this he might effect in three different ways:

1. "By merely causing the fact to be narrated."

1. The Mass is a historical representation of the Sacrifice of Calvary; the numberless allusions to to Christ's death on the cross that occur in the Mass, but especially the words of the Consecration, prove it.

2. "By causing it to be represented by actors."

2. The Mass is a symbolic representation of the Sacrifice of Calvary. It is a sacred pageantry which brings scenically before the eyes, through a variety of expressive ceremonies, by the shape and the appointments of the altar, by every article of the vestments of the priest, the Divine Tragedy of Calvary. The Mass therefore is a public "act" of divine worship.

3. "By being present at it himself and thus representing the scene in which He Himself had personally been en-

3. The Mass is the perpetual renewal in a Sacramental way of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Christ is present on the

gaged. No one could doubt the reality of the King's presence, although the past victory is merely represented anew."

altar under the veil of bread and wine; and although He can die no more, His death on the cross is represented mystically by the separate consecration of the bread and wine. He is present on the altar in the Mass to commemorate His victory on the cross and to offer Himself anew to the Divine Majesty, as the Lamb of God sacrificed for us on Calvary.

The Mass then is indeed a historical and scenical representation of the Sacrifice of the Cross, but beyond and above this, it is chiefly and essentially the actual renewal of it; with this difference, that whilst the Sacrifice of the Cross was redemptive and impetratory and merited the salvation of the world; the Sacrifice of the Mass propitiates Divine Justice, applies the merits of Calvary to the living and the dead and sanctifies. This then is the meaning of Christ's command: "Do this in commemoration of Me." This is the Holy Mass.

SUNDAY EXAMPLES.

Part One.

Montalembert, peer of France, orator and writer, the author of the great work "The Monks of the West," and of the charming "Life of St. Elizabeth," the fearless defender of the Church—a little too daring perhaps at times and impetuous—ranks with the greatest Catholic laymen of all times not only of France but of the world. It is said, that his faith was at a low ebb in his youth. His letters so full of fervent and generous enthusiasm for Holy Religion written whilst still a youth to a college friend, his unsullied virtue amid an atmosphere of irreligion, his deep love for and appreciation of Holy Communion, but especially the fact, that excepting only one other, he was the only practical Catholic among the students attending the college Saint Barbe, Paris, in his day, would prove that his faith was singularly alive and active and by no means on the decline during his years of adolescence and early manhood. It is an old story, however, current for half a century and longer, which relates how from under the ashes of a false enlightenment and religious indifference, the spark of faith, faint but still glimmering in the heart of Montalembert, was fanned to new life and vigor. According to his own avowal, it is asserted, he owed this grace to an edifying sight that met his eyes

one Sunday morning in Ireland. Incredulous of what he had so often read about the religious fervor of the Irish people, he resolved to see for himself. To make the test as authoritative as possible he chose a rainy Sunday for his purpose. Setting out in his carriage therefore, he followed the people streaming in from every point of the compass, up the hillside to a poor thatched house which served as a chapel. When he got there, the priest was already vested for Mass and the little house of God full to overflowing with worshipers. To his wonder and edification, fully half the congregation which the congested chapel could not admit, knelt outside, and despite the rain and slush, followed the Holy Mass with rapt attention and devotion. His eyes were opened, his conscience aroused from its lethargy. He returned from the scene a changed man.

The story, in its bearing upon the practical faith of the people of Ireland, has been confirmed over and over again; as it touches Montalembert himself, it may be and probably is true in a relative sense. Coming from frivolous France to the Isle of the Saints, it may well have seemed to him that his faith was torpid and almost extinct by the side of such a wonderful exhibition of it, in and around that hillside chapel.

The Rev. Pacifico Deani, O.S.F., was one of the celebrated preachers of his day. Cardinal Wiseman, who heard him deliver an Advent sermon in the Church of Araceli, on the Capitol, speaks admiringly of his fervent and wonderful eloquence. This holy Franciscan, in a sermon to the clergy and laity spoken in the choir

of St. Peter's, in which he dwelt upon the sublime worth and dignity of the Holy Mass, drew a picture that might well arrest the attention of every Catholic. "Supposing," said he, "a priest were rapt to heaven and were ordered to offer up there the Sacrifice of the Altar of the Lamb of God. How would he celebrate that Mass?" Without stopping to answer, he went on to paint in glowing words the attitude and countenance and the feelings of the adoring spirits, while for only once assisting at what in the Church Militant is a daily privilege. How indeed, would a priest in the presence of the heavenly hierarchies say Mass, and how would the faithful assist thereat if they were present? With this picture in view the fervor of our Catholic people in attending Mass is easily intelligible.

For Mass is always said in presence of the Holy Angels, not in heaven of course, but on earth. Moreover, listen to the prayer of the Church in the Canon of the Mass: We most humbly beseech Thee, almighty God, command these things to be carried by the hands of Thy holy Angel to Thy altar on high, in the sight of Thy divine Majesty, that as many of us as, by participating at this Altar, shall receive the most sacred body and blood of Thy Son, may be filled with all heavenly benediction and grace.

Part Two. Rev. Frederick William Faber.

We have an evidence of a like grace working in a similar way in what follows.

A contributary cause to the conversion of Rev. Frederick William Faber, the learned and saintly Oratorian

and devotional writer, was the contrast he found in the religious life between Catholics and Protestants on the Continent.

It was in 1841, whilst still a Protestant, that he records in his Itinerary the unfavorable impression made upon him by a Lutheran Sunday as he found it kept in Dresden, one of the most thoroughly Protestant cities in Germany. In contrast to the Dresden Sunday which drew the people not to the church but to pleasure-gardens and resorts, he has this to say about Sunday observance in the Tyrol:

"This morning at seven I occupied myself very pleasingly in watching the people come to the church, which is just opposite my windows. It is pouring with rain, and has been for some hours; yet early as it is, no one seems prevented from coming to church. Many of them must have come from the country, for I am sure the village itself can never contain so large a congregation. Most of them are wet through, yet men and women of every age are thronging in notwithstanding. It is no high-day but a common Sunday, with ordinary mass and sermon.

There are tottering old men with straggling hair, who may well have remembered Hofer, and perchance have followed his heron plume to victory or to a defeat more glorious in its hardihood and unvanquished moral strength than a thousand victories of Marengo or Austerlitz. The early hour and the beating rain cannot keep these ancients of the mountain hamlet from their church. Then there are gallant stout-looking

men of middle age, with firm step and upright eye, doubtless the householders of the dales. There are young bachelors, livers out of doors and hard workers, too old for a mother's thrall, and yet not safely chained as yet to the sweet and sobering slavery of wedded cares; a class, so lamentably few of which we can allure to our parish churches. And there are wives and mothers, active, bustling, neatly attired, brimful of greetings; troops also of boys and girls, gay and happy even in the rain."

To Catholics there is nothing wonderful in all this. On every Sunday the world over, we may observe the lively faith and assiduity with which the faithful, young and old, silently and eagerly hasten to attend Holy Mass. But to him a Protestant, it was a fact worth recording; and being a man of deep religiosity it was not without its effect upon him. He studied, he compared, he inferred, he groped his way until that which he sought for was found. He became Catholic in 1845.

"The greatness of our privilege and therefore of the glory of the Sacraments is necessarily diminished by anything that makes less of the unutterable miseries and most appalling difficulties of salvation outside the Church."

A convert who could write thus would cling to Holy Church with the tenacity of a drowning man to the life-boat, and appreciate and love her with the ardor of a saint. And so he did, as his life and writings prove. With the learning and sweetness and persuasiveness of

a St. Francis de Sales, he pours out his soul in praise to God and zeal for souls.

"There is not a benediction of the Church, whether it light on salt, water, candle, palm, ashes, vestments, sacred vessels, images, or any other matter, but it is full of Jesus, and has its own peculiar grace, and is destined to its own beneficient end. The Church is the multiplication of Jesus, the omnipresence of Jesus, the energy of Jesus. It is all Jesus. The Church exists not, but in Him and for Him. Earth has no privilege equal to that of being a member of His Church; and they dishonor both it and Him who extenuate the dismal horrors of that outer darkness in which souls lie that are aliens from the Church."

RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM.

Edouard Rod, a French novelist of the psychological school, lived and wrote in the second half of the nineteenth century. After having wandered for many years the crooked ways of religious skepticism and unbelief without finding rest, he at last retraced his steps and found himself on the road to truth. Whether he followed this road to its goal which is the Catholic Church, I hardly believe; still, I do not know. The experience of his troubled life in the search of truth he records in an autobiographical novel which was crowned by the French Academy. This book is called "The Sense of Life," and from it I condense the following.

At first he was an aggressive unbeliever, so much so, that when his wife begged him to have their children baptized, he answered peremptorily, "No, never!" But as time progressed and the experiences of life brought upon him disillusionment upon disillusionment, his temper toward religion became more tolerant. His hatred of it was softened to indifference; the meaning of the word "Truth" wavered in his mind. He argued that his system of doubt and skepticism was as much a religion to him as was the positive religion to his wife; if it was not better neither was it worse. But why then trouble the simple faith of his wife and why not satisfy

her and have the children baptized? It was not long before he found his neutral state of religious indifference untenable.

The occasion was a quasi-religious ceremony under Masonic auspices which by chance he witnessed in the Pantheon. The church of St. Genevieve secularized under the First and again under the Second Republic, and twice restored to Catholic worship, was being secularized a third time under the Third Republic in 1885, and turned into a French Westminster Abbey. Victor Hugo had just died and a great State-funeral and interment in the Pantheon had been decreed him; hence the hurry to "disaffect," as the infidels expressed themselves, or as every Christian would say, "to pervert" the church of St. Genevieve into a pagan Pantheon. Poor Victor Hugo! Now that he is dead and judged, I wonder if the recollection of the visit he twice paid the Ven. Don Bosco just a year before, aggravated the delight or sorrow which his soul experienced in eternity at the gorgeous funeral pageantry which was gotten up by questionable friends and admirers in his honor? Hugo and Don Bosco were European celebrities whose works and fame differed from each other as day differs from night. The holy priest warned him earnestly but fruitlessly to return to the faith of his fathers whilst there was yet time. The priest and the litterateur are dead. The remains of the former are or will soon be raised to the altars of the Church; those of the latter were laid in the Pantheon. But the Pantheon, that is, old St. Genevieve, had first to be desecrated in order to

be made a fitting place for his ashes. Think of it! The God was being expelled from His house to give place to Victor Hugo; the Adored of yesterday and all times, to make way for the idol of today! The Sweet Christ of the Imitation was made to flee before the man of the bitter, satirical "Chastisement!" The sweet Holy Virgin of so many tender miracles, the Immaculate Mother, and St. Genevieve, patron of Paris, were put aside that honor might be paid to other representatives of the sex—women frivolous, unprincipled, and lost to all sense of shame—of the type and character of Marion Delorme.

All this, the novelist who chanced to be present in the Pantheon that day in May 1885, saw and described, as in substance I am giving it. This, the governmental free-thinkers said, was the progress of light, and that the cause of truth gained by the exchange.

The ceremony of secularization was on. They were all there: Carnot, Ferry, and their henchmen; municipal counsellors, deputies, officials high and low, with their hats on and their canes in hand; talking and laughing with insolent bearing and look, and with the fumes of their cigars banishing the last trace of incense that might still linger in the holy place.

In a corner of the church, before an altar which was left standing, a poor woman meanly dressed, knelt and prayed without minding the noise and profanations around her; prayed to that God Whom these impious men had expelled from His temple. With her widow's mite she had bought two candles and had set them on

the altar. Whilst the poor flickering flames were lighting up the desolate profaned sanctuary, she was fervently commending her needs and her sorrows to Him Who said, "Come to Me all ye that labor and are burdened and I will refresh you." A welcome which all the machinations of evil men aided by the ingenuity of hell can never invalidate. For if every altar in Christendom fell, Christ would still be at the poor woman's beck and call even as He was present to her forefathers in 1789; as He was present to our ancestors, at one time and place or another, when the storm of persecution swept the land.

What the novelist had seen in the Pantheon he studied and compared. The contrast between the inspiring faith of the praying widow beside the repellant attitude of the insolent unbelievers, was too marked not to leave a profound impression upon him. The unsteady and feeble light of the two blessed candles illumined his soul as a lightning flash lights up the cloud-enveloped sky. He fell upon his knees and signed himself with the cross. "Ah! poor old unknown woman! What confidences may you not have addressed to Him Who understands; what sorrows, laid at the feet of Him Who alone can effectually soothe the heart and dry away the scalding tear! For His holy altar what substitute have these political mountebanks to offer you, and the orphan, and the homeless, and the friendless, the sick, and those in the agony of death? You are right against them all." He left the Pantheon.

"My dear wife," he said upon crossing the threshold of his home, "go, have the children baptized!"

By way of appraising the state of soul of both the hero in the "Sense of Life," and the poor lone woman kneeling before the forgotten altar in the widowed church of St. Genevieve, the worldling would summarize it all in the flippant phrase, "Religious Enthusiasm." "What is religious enthusiasm? It is something that raises us above this earth; lifts us up to heaven and helps us to realize true blessedness, and eternity itself. Sir, can that support which makes me bear such a sorrow as mine and would make me bear anything, which, as you know, has helped men to endure the most dreadful torments, not only with courage, but with joy; can this be looked upon as a pitiable thing? And can we feel afraid to see them we love armed with so strong a shield against every kind of evil! Really, those who take such a view must be very strange people, and when any external evil falls upon those who so judge, or perhaps at the hour of death, I am sure they will feel a vague perhaps unacknowledged regret that they do not possess this religious enthusiasm, which makes all blows light, and fills every circumstance with hope. To condemn religious enthusiasm, is, in other words, to condemn a too great love of God. Foolish, beyond measure, foolish world! It finds fault with those who love God too much; and alas! it is easy to understand why He is loved too little, but to say He can be loved too much is a folly bordering on madness."

—"A Sister's Story."

THE CLOCK OF THE MASS.

"For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice." Mal i:11. When it is midnight in New York the eastern sun sets the matin bells aringing along the Adriatic and summons all Italy from its sleep, to begin anew with the new day, that glorious round of Masses which as the rising and setting of the sun will continue until time is no more.

Instantly, from Milan to Naples, in the land of St. Benedict and St. Francis, the altars at which saints have knelt and prayed, and in Rome, the tombs of SS. Peter and Paul and of countless martyrs, are lighted up with blessed candles; then, the Vicar of Christ Himself and thousands of priests ascend the altar to offer to the Heavenly Father His only Divine Son for the salvation of men. It is an hour of ineffable blessings; an hour that silently comes and quickly goes. But quickly as it goes, hardly are the sacred lights quenched in the Dome of St. Peter, and whilst the echo of the holy bells is still lingering among the beetling rocks of Monte Casino, along the Catacombs, through the Coliseum and around Loretto's Holy House; when the valleys of Catholic Switzerland, the uplands and lowlands of Germany, France the beautiful, and chivalrous Spain, are calling their several people to the Holy Sacrifice.

Simultaneously, the eager bells of the islands of the North Sea ring out in glad response to the chimes of Normandy, their rhythmic peals surging back and forth over land and sea: from Rouen where St. Joan of Arc on the burning pyre took her flight to Heaven, from the land of St. Boniface along the Elbe and the Rhine, from Flanders to Brittany, the bells ring out across the channel to recreant England, once the dowry of Our Lady, which St. Augustine made happy, now happy no longer; to Ireland, verdant still with the same living faith with which St. Patrick had dowered her and which her thousands of martyrs have fructified. Eagerly the people listen and obey. Then, whether to some cathedral shrine, gorgeous as the dome of Cologne or the basilica of Notre Dame, or to some wayside chapel poor as the stable of Bethlehem—great is the number of the faithful through all Europe, who hasten to the daily Mass.

In the meantime, sleep deep as death, holds New York in thrall. It is two o'clock a. m. But out beyond its pale, upon every habitable spot of the wild Atlantic, between the Islands of Cape Verde and the Bermudas, many and many a white-robed priest is ascending the altar in uninterrupted sequence of hours and half-hours, whilst the clocks upon the Hudson strike two, then three, then four.

Four o'clock is the hour sacred to prayer and meditation in convents, monasteries and abbeys. Four o'clock is the hour when man disputes with bird and beast the economy of time. For so says the Psalmist; "O, God,

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my God! I watch to Thee at the break of day!" Then does the lark rise for its morning song from the New England fields and the rural maid hasten to the milking shed.

Look now, and observe! Outheralding the sun, the light of the sacred lamps glimmer through the fogs of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Few and sparse are the people who live in that inhospitable clime. But, if few and sparce, like those who with Mary the Mother of God stood at the foot of the Cross, yet with faith and fervor they come, many a fisherman to the Holy Mass to seek protection upon his dangerous calling against the treachery of the sea, its tides and fogs; and many a lone mother and bereaved wife, to find solace and strength in their long vigils for those who will perhaps never return; a son or a husband lost upon the stormwhipped coasts of Labrador or the Rock of Norman's Woe.

However, come they few or come they many, when the first gleams of the advancing sun are gilding the brow of the Statue of Liberty overlooking New York and the clocks of the Metropolis are striking five, then six; Montreal and Quebec, more impregnable even as fortresses of the faith than of nature, are radiant with altar lights; and radiant with blessed candle light like these twin cities on the St. Lawrence are the altars in a thousand Canadian churches.

The sun has now crossed the Atlantic. Silently and cautiously the harbinger of day is peering into the homes of the Empire State. It is six o'clock in the

morning. The Holy Angelus is ringing out its glad paean of praise and thanksgiving to Christ Incarnate and to His Blessed Mother, and ringing in the daily Mass. It is the hour when Heaven stoops to earth over all eastern America; from the Palisades of the Hudson to the Florida reefs, from the wilds of the Orinoco to where the teeming Pampas are watered by the La Platte; it is the summons to pious souls, to young and old, countryman and citizen, merchant and laborer, consecrated nuns and innocent children, to blend their voices with that of the priest at the altar, yea, with that of the angels; to swell the three-fold Sanctus of the holy choir of the Thrones whose privilege and duty it is to stand perpetual guard around the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

But as the Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus! of the heavenly hierarchies of the Thrones and of the Cherubim and Seraphim, never ceases; ceaseless too, as is the advance of approaching day, so ceasless, also, is the heavenly harmony of the Sanctuary Bells, now echoing and re-echoing among the Appalachian Mountains, then borne upward and onward by spire and steeple over the undulating fields of Ohio, so that, when the clocks in the belfries along the Atlantic strike eight, the regal valley of the Illinois—of our own Illinois, consecrated to God more than three hundred years ago, when the saintly Father Marquette before his congregation of savage neophytes offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—the State of Illinois and the vast broad watershed of the Mississippi, are tinkling and

throbbing and jubilating with the words and song and music of the sublime ritual of sacrifice in the presence of which even the angels wonder and tremble and adore.

But keep your eyes on the clock! The hand on the dial never stops. Even so, whilst the clocks on the Atlantic are pointing to eleven and passing on to noon, and the whirr of the factory wheels, the tick of the typewriter and of the counting machines, are slowing down for their midday rest; the Altar-Seraphs, never resting, haste and wing their flight over the limitless plains of Kansas and Nebraska and the Rocky Mountains; stopping here and there in church or chapel on the prairie, on the upland, and on the mountain side; then speeding northward over the virgin fields and forests of western Canada, in search for every house of God in miners' camp and lumberman's village, and northward to the ice-fields of Alaska; sheer west also, where the olive and the orange and the vine are fanned and watered by the dew-laden winds of the Golden Gate; then southward through poor, downtrodden, calumniated but ever faithful old Mexico, even to Cape Horn; all the while signalling the Esquimaux and the Indian, peon and slave, freeman, hunter, miner, farmer—calling one and all to sacred rites where they may obtain forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation.

From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, this work of salvation will go on. It is now two o'clock past noon in New York.

Feverishly the walks of business are thronged with restless men where fortunes are daily made and daily

lost. Fortunes, in the making and in the losing of which many a life is staked and many an immortal soul, too, and is lost. But whether along the Atlantic or ten thousand miles away, the Lord hath said it and He shall not repent, that as His priests are priests forever according to the order of Melchisedech, so the sacrifice, for which the Priesthood was instituted, will continue to be offered up in every place and in every clime until the end of the world.

Borrow now the wings of the dove and, apace with the sun, direct your flight to the myriad of islands which rest on the bosom of the deep and dread Pacific. Stop for half an hour in some chapel among the sugar fields of Hawaii or in the scented groves of the East Indies. The holy angels will be there and the saintly missionary and the heroic Sister. You will find them —priests and sisters—in the hospitals also and in the pest-infected leper settlements of the South Sea Islands. You may well stop with them for half an hour; they are there for life. The Mass has begun. Caucasian and Negro, Malay and Australasian, in strange and polyglot tongues are uttering the selfsame profoundly expressive words: Introibo ad altare Dei! "I will ascend unto the altar of God!" Quickly, and the Holy Mass is said. The Ite Missa est! is spoken. The infinite tribute of adoration has been paid to God. Among the "blind and the lame and the halt," the Holy Mass has been said; it is over but only to be offered up anew.

Just as the Evening Angelus is reverberating along the banks of the Hudson, the altar is again being made

ready for the same sacrifice, now within the domains of imperial Japan, in the congested cities and teeming villages of China also, and in India where St. Thomas wrought and St. Francis Xavier lived and died. The Holy Table is being laid at which all men even from the very extremities of the earth—the white and black and yellow and brown—are invited to sit and to take their fill. Yea, and upon the Aryan Plain is this Holy Banquet spread, upon the Siberian Steppes, upon the Persian Plateau, and at the very cradle of the Human Race between the Euphrates and the Tigris where the Garden of Paradise once lay; so that this Heavenly Bread, this Bread of Life may restore to man the spiritual life which he forfeited when Adam and Eve eat of the forbidden fruit.

The Garden of Paradise and the Garden of Olives, morally, are distant from each other, as is the North Pole removed from the South; but geographically they are quite adjacent, for they have the same longitude, the same temperature, the same climate. The stars which shone over the erstwhile Paradise are the same stars which look down upon the Garden of Olives. From the Garden of Pleasure then, the Holy Hour moves to the Garden of Pain, with Jerusalem in sight.

The rays of the evening sun are now aslant over all America. The pall of night is upon the Hudson. But in the very meridian of night, when the clocks strike eleven and New York is wrapt in pleasure or in sleep, the sun which never sleeps is looking over the walls of the Holy City, and Jerusalem is preparing for the Holy Mass.

Within its holy precincts, in remembrance and renewal of Christ's bloody sacrifice on the cross, the unbloody sacrifice of the New Law is being offered up on the holiest altar in the universe, Mt. Calvary, under the canopy of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Again it is midnight in New York and again from a thousand altars in the city of Rome, the uplifted host following the sun, circles the earth with its round of infinite blessing, forever verifying what Malachias foretold. Upon the dial of the Clock of Ages moves the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, proffering salvation to all men in every clime unto the end.

ALTAR FLOWERS
IN
GENUS

DISTINCTIVE SERVICE.

"For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body," I. Cor. vi., 20.

If ever there was a writer who upon his death deserved to be eulogized by his peers and to be carried to his grave in state it was Louis Veuillot for forty years editor of the great Catholic French Metropolitan weekly "The Universe."

We make this statement not because he has immortalized himself upon the scroll of literary fame but because by his restless zeal and fearlessness, by his flawless loyalty and honesty in defending the doctrines and rights of Holy Church against her governmental and freethinking adversaries in France and all Europe before and after 1850, during the fraughted period of the Catholic Renaissance, he has inscribed his name in golden letters in the Book of Life. Long before his death, which occurred in 1883, in his book "Here and There," he expressed as the equivalent of his last will the wish: "Place my pen at my side; put the crucifix, my pride, on my breast; lay this volume at my feet; then close my coffin in peace . . . I trust in Jesus. Here on earth I have not been ashamed of Him, and on the last day when I stand before His Father He will not be ashamed of me."

Veuillot's last will no doubt was complied with.

Who will say that it is not also the last wish expressed or implied of every Catholic to be buried like this great Catholic editor with the crucifix upon his bosom, and let me add, with the holy Rosary entwined around his fingers?

This wish, which is so common as to have become a custom, is not only beautiful and touching but also, in the case of the true Catholic at least, most significative and proper as expressing the sum and substance of his life. The life of a Christian is a life on the cross; every Christian worthy of the name bears metaphorically speaking the wounds of Christ upon his person. He is all Christ's and next to Christ he is devoted to Christ's Most Blessed Mother. Rightly then does every worthy Catholic wish and claim that the cross and the Rosary should share with his body the solitude of the tomb. Through the cross—the physical and moral crosses he has so long and patiently borne—and with the blessed beads to help and inspire, he has labored and suffered with Christ and His Mother; the cross and the Rosary therefore will be his titles to glory hereafter.

Indeed to be buried with the cross is more than simply a pious wish that originated in the heart of her children, for the Church by special direction, at least as regards the priest, desires that when he dies and is prepared for burial, a crucifix be placed in his hands. Moreover, presuming in the case of her priests that they have been in accordance with their state close fol-

lowers of Christ Crucified, she anticipates with maternal eagerness the glory of their resurrection as far as this is possible on earth, by ordering that at their death they should be vested in those sacerdotal robes which they wore during the sublimest function of the Priesthood, namely in the vestments of Holy Mass. Is not this a distinction, if not in degree at least in kind, similar to the grand and gorgeous honor the Church pays at times to her heroic sons and daughters, the glory of beatification and canonization, and is it not an image and presage of the glorious resurrection to come?

In this singling out of what is distinctive in the Priesthood and in the lives of her children, the Church emphasizes the teaching of St. Paul: "Glorify and bear God in your body." Like an all-conquering army adown the ages march the children of God, battle-scarred and victorious—every vocation and state in life with its badge of distinguishing service, every individual with his standard aloft—following the footsteps of Christ, their cross bearing Leader. Passing onward from time to eternity, sealed on their foreheads, vested in white robes and carrying the palm-branch and crown, they are glorified forever for having "glorified and borne God in their bodies." So interpreted, reads the vision of St. John the Divine.

From the fact that the rich man in the gospel for having feasted sumptuously every day of his life without ever a thought about his soul or concern for the poor, was buried in hell and in his abysmal prison was tortured by a burning thirst and no doubt by a fierce

hunger also, we infer inversely that in a like way, in what members of the body the saints whilst on earth have signally served God, in those members will they be especially glorified in heaven.

Did not Christ even after His resurrection bear the marks of the five wounds upon His glorified body? And is it not a common belief, a belief sanctioned by the Church, that the cross upon which He died and by which He triumphed over sin and death will appear luminous in the skies as His especial ensign upon the day of His Second Coming?

Well then, just as the cross symbolizes and proclaims to heaven and earth, to all the world, the sufferings of Christ and His triumph and what His victory implies and teaches—the death of deaths, the defeat of sin, the glorification of suffering, the deification of sacrifice—as the cross is in fact an abridgment of Christ's teaching, of His suffering, and of His glorified life, so also in case of Christ's immediate followers, the Apostles, the various instruments of torture at their side by which they have come down to us in painting and in sculpture, epitomize for us their life-work and its sequel. For like the cross these instruments of torture proclaim their profession of faith, their loyalty to their Divine Master, their defiance of pain for the sake of Christ, their death and victory.

If the pictorial lives of the holy martyrs and confessors have proven of inestimable value to the children of Holy Church, it is because they teach faith and morals in a way so simple and inimitable. Most graph-

ically does each picture tell that the saints have borne Christ and glorified Him in their bodies. The wheel upon which they were broken, the rack by which their limbs were wrenched apart, the pyre upon which they were scorched and burned to death, the gridiron, the ax, the sword, the spear, the gibbet—thus armed the martyrs severally entered the arena, combated the powers of hell, fought the good fight and triumphed.

But whether it is the mute sword or the ax that tells us the story of their tragedy and its glorious solution, the sword or the ax or the cross it will be, the cross of some kind or another it must be, which for all eternity will be their mark, which must also be our mark of distinction, if with Christ and His saints we hope to reign in heaven.

The wide application of this principle that only as we measure out will it be meted back to us, is evident from the words in the Apocalypse as applied in the one instance to virginal souls: "And they sung as it were a new canticle before the throne . . . these follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

From the texts also of Daniel and Tobias as applied to the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy: "They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity." "As thou didst bury the dead . . . I offered thy prayer to the Lord . . . and now the Lord hath sent me to heal thee."

Surely there is something more than mere ceremony or formality in the deep and gorgeous symbolism of the Church. As when for example she emblemizes under

the figure of a lamb, innocence and martyrdom. Is not Christ Himself called the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world? Or of the dove an image of guilelessness and holy simplicity; or of the lily as typifying chastity and virginity; or of the rose or the basket of roses, or the spilling of roses, as pointing to the manifold works of Christian Charity; or yet again of the heart aflame or transfixed with a sword, to image the consuming fire that surged within the hearts of the servants of God? It was because the Blessed Mother's love was deep and wide as an ocean without limits that her heart is represented as transfixed with seven swords and as a consequence again, that her sorrow at the foot of the cross was immeasurable and merited for her the title of Queen of Martyrs and Queen of all the Saints.

The aureole which illumines the brow and transfigures the person of the elect in heaven, depends for its kind and measure upon the heed which during life the Christian gave to the words of St. Paul, "Glorify and bear God in your bodies." "There is one glory of the sun," says the apostle, "another the glory of the moon and another the glory of the stars. For star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead."

St. Paul diffidently but judiciously enumerates for his neophytes at Corinth all that he had done and suffered for Christ's sake. He says: "Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes save one; once was I stoned; thrice beaten with rods; thrice suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I spent in the depths of the

sea." Then he goes on to relate what dangers he encountered in his apostolic work by land and sea from robbers, from his own nation, and from the gentiles. Next he alludes to his incessant labor amid long watchings and hunger and thirst and nakedness; but above and beyond all that which weighs him down, he says, is "the solicitude for all the churches." Such is the glorious boast St. Paul could make and which at the end of his life justified his sublime confidence: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord the Just Judge will render to me at that day."

A like jubilant song will every soul, must every soul on the day of reckoning, be able to sing, if it is to share in the triumph and happiness of Christ its Model and Master. The whole genius of Christianity is expressed in two words: Suffering, happiness. Its philosophy and theology rest upon Calvary the mount of suffering and upon Olivet the mount of the triumph. Good Friday and Easter Sunday are the synthesis of the whole depositum of revealed truth. There is nothing recondite in all this. Because the Christian Religion is divine it is so sublimely simple. Suffering first, then the crown. The cross is the instrument of suffering and the symbol of immortality. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," this is the Calvary of life; "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," that is its resurrection. "Blessed are they that mourn," this is the cross of Good Friday; "for they shall be comforted," that is the same cross

transfigured on Easter day. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake," this is the Lent of life; "for they shall possess the kingdom of heaven," that is the triumphant Ascension Day. And so all through the Eight Beatitudes, all through the Four Gospels, all through the teachings of the Church, all through the lives of the saints, the lesson is uniformly insistent and the same; that as Christ triumphed on the cross we can and will triumph in no other way; and that as Christ wore the marks of the nails even upon His glorified body, we, when we appear before Him must carry with us some marks of the fray in which we were engaged for His sake and some trophy moreover of victory, or else we have neither a ground for hope nor a right to expect to be affiliated, as the case may be, with one or other of the choirs of the apostles, of the virgins, or martyrs, or confessors; yea, or to be counted with David and Magdalen among the holy Penitents and to be gathered with them among the ransomed to our Heavenly Father's home.

Our Mother

It is idle to inquire whether devotion to Mary is practised more in our day than it was in the past. The devotion has never varied in degree but only in its phases; for love is ingenious and inventive and is ever seeking to express itself in different ways. The Blessed Virgin Mary whom we address in her own doxology as Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and Spouse of the Holy Ghost, was at all times loved and venerated in Holy Church second only to her Divine Son. The faithful offer their ineffable Mother testimonies of love that vary in kind with the age and the times, just as loving children do who search the garden over and according to the season tender their parent the vernal jonquil, the lilac and the violet; the June lily next and the fragrant rose when spring blends into summer; and as with the aging year, summer dies and autumn comes in, the dahlia and the aster with the fairest blossoms of the crysanthemum for the fall.

If during the three centuries of persecution under the Roman Emperors all external manifestation of devotion to the Mother of God was lacking in part or entirely, it is what we might have expected. What scope could there have been for this or any devotion to externalize itself, during a time when the faithful were battling with the powers of hell and heathendom

for their very existence as Christians? When every hour they could escape the savage vigilance of their persecutors must be given to the celebration of that Holy Mystery through which alone they could find strength to triumph in the bloody combat before them? And yet, incredible as it may seem, it was during this very time of persecution, during the very time when the Christians were compelled to seek out subterranean hiding places where they might worship God, that their love and veneration for His Holy Mother as witnessed even to this day on marble slabs and golden tablets, was marvelous and profound.

Not until the distinguished archaeologist, John Baptist de Rossi, in 1863, published and gave to the world, the results of his explorations among the catacombs, in his book entitled, "Pictures of the Holy Virgin Mary taken from the catacombs," had the Christian public any idea with what ardor and zeal the veneration of the Virgin Mother was cultivated among the First Christians. The number and variety of these pictures is immense. It is impossible even to enumerate, much less to describe, the symbolic groups of which the Immaculate Mother is the center. In the catacomb of St. Priscilla, the pictures of our Blessed Lady are so numerous that it is called the Catacomb of Mary. These pictures represent her sometimes as the Mother of Christ and then again as the Mother of Men. Their artistic value, it is needless to say, is small; there was no Raphael in the catacombs to wield the pencil or the brush.

Nor would Raphael's wonder touch, nor Titian's living dyes, nor even the heavenborn art of the unrivalled Murillo, have enhanced what, with the keen and searching eye of faith, the early Christians descried in their crude Madonnas. Nevertheless, the incomparable pictures of the Virgin Mary of the Masters, what are they but copies of her likeness which the holy martyrs first conceived and with a martyr's hand first chiselled on clay and stone? From them the painters of every age and clime drew their inspiration. And as these martyr heroes and heroines were the first seed of the Church, so also were they the first who by example and through tradition have handed down to us and stimulated and consecrated love and devotion to Mary, the august, the pure, the inviolate, the immaculate Virgin, the mirror of true womanhood, "our poor nature's solitary boast."

There is not much choice between schism and heresy as to which is the worse; they generally include each other and equally exclude their adherents from the Church. But there is this in favor of the heretical schism of the Russians and the Greeks that it retains devotion to Mary, whereas the heresy of Protestantism discredits it, and maligns and hates the Divine Mother. As a consequence, it is not improbable, that if given a chance, the Russian Schismatics will through the intercession of Mary come back into the fold of Christ as a body; the Protestant heretics, never. However, individuals amongst them have ever been found who in spite of the pernicious tendency of their sec-

tarianism, honor and love the Virgin Mother. A beautiful anthology in her praise might be made up from cullings in alien gardens. Keble, an Episcopalian, George Eliot, a Methodist, Longfellow, a Puritan, Walter Scott, a Presbyterian, Wordsworth and Swinburne, and many others, have sung her praises in chaste and melodious verse. But only by stealth, as it were, and with a kind of regretful hesitancy and reluctance; as when Hawthorne wrote that he envied the Catholics their faith in the sweet and sacred Virgin Mother, who stands between them and the Deity, intercepting His awful splendor but yet permitting His love to stream down upon them. Or, as when Ruskin wrote that the worship of the Madonna is one of the noblest and most vital graces of Catholicism producing holiness of life and purity of character. What he wrote in addition to the words just quoted, namely, that there is not an innocent cottage over the length and breadth of Europe where her honored image could not be found and where her influence did not comfort the sorest trials of woman —leads me to my last reflection: Only in the Catholic Church is the cultus of Mary at home; there alone it thrives and matures to perfection.

Within our Holy Church all that art can do and genius yield, is laid in tribute at her feet. Within her pale, painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry and song, combine to do her honor. It is owing to their loving ingenuity that the faithful children of the Church wear her livery of the blessed Scapular, and assemble in serried ranks in Sodalities and Confraternities and Relig-

ious Congregations to proclaim her praises and through the holy Rosary to beseech her intercession.

Ah, the Holy Rosary! What miracles of grace has it not wrought, what wonders in the natural and supernatural order has it not achieved! There is a story told by Mgr. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, of a young lady stricken down by one of those inexorable diseases for which there is no remedy. "'Tis a sad calamity you are in, my child," he said to her upon entering the sickroom. "But father, do you not think I shall go to heaven?" "My child," the priest said, "we have great hopes that you will." "Father, I feel almost certain of it," she replied, "for from the day of my First Communion when you advised the children to say the Holy Rosary daily, I have never failed once in its recitation." And so this feeble woman; this dying wife and mother, taken away in the bloom of youth from all that gives happiness to life, bid good-bye to it and to all that were dear to her, bravely and cheerfully even, confident that Mary to whom she gave a filial love would not refuse her in the crucial hour of life a mother's help.

The Holy Rosary, the Garland of Hail Marys!

The great and pious Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris, is said to have remarked on his deathbed that he would not exchange the merit of one additional Hail Mary recited piously for all his knowledge. Francis Suarez, called the Doctor Eximius, who ranks next to St. Thomas as a theologian, could have said the same, but for another reason. He was of noble birth

but of plebeian intellect. The Rector of Salamanca, at whose door he came knocking for admission into the Jesuit Order, rejected him. The Provincial at Valladolid, to whom Suarez next applied, was advised by his consultors not to admit him. The Provincial, however, of his own accord accepted and sent him on trial to Salamanca. The Community received him reluctantly and made him sign an agreement that if asked to do so he would work as a brother. He made his novitiate in Medina del Campo whence he was sent to Salamanca for his Philosophy. A new course of Logic was just begun, but hard as he studied, Francis could make no headway. Completely discouraged, he asked permission to become a laybrother. The Superior, edified by his humility and good will, put off his request, advising him to try a little longer and in the meantime to pray fervently to the Mother of Wisdom for help. Suarez had always been very devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary and therefore she did not delay in coming to his assistance. The miracle which she worked three hundred years before in favor of those fervent clients of hers, Bl. Albertus Magnus and Duns Scotus, she was about to repeat. Francis found of a sudden that his mind had become enlightened and his understanding keen. The lectures of his professors were now readily grasped and assimilated; all difficulties had vanished. He became the leader and the oracle among the students. Therefore, with good reason, he too might have said that all his knowledge would not weigh up in merit and effectiveness, one fervent Hail Mary.

It is the conviction that she, who has proved time and again and is continually attesting her claim and her right to the appellations, Mother of the afflicted, Refuge of sinners, Mother of perpetual help; it is this conviction which has given rise to so many beautiful customs associated with her memory and her name.

Taylor, the dramatist, who was present at the death and burial of a little shepherdess in Vannes, tells of a beautiful and touching custom which he witnessed upon the occasion, a custom which, founded upon tradition, prevails through the whole of Brittany.

"As the young girl's death had happened in the month of May, her bier was covered with flowers by the village maidens. It is a common belief among those good and simple peasants, that death during the month of Mary is an assurance of happiness thereafter. Youths and maidens therefore, over whom the shadows of death are lowering, pray to be spared till the flowers of May come back, or to be taken before the flowers have withered, if life and May are waning together." The tenderness, the delicacy, the piety of this beautiful practice is grounded upon a reason well-known to all who like those good people of Brittany honor and love the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This Breton idyl suggests a custom quite as beautiful and devotional, which prevails in Switzerland and the uplands of Germany. In every Catholic village and town throughout these districts, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven which Holy Church commemorates annually on the fifteenth

of August, is celebrated with an added festivity in the afternoon. On account of this "added celebration," the Feast of the Assumption is known amongst them also as "Our Lady's Flower Day." Weeks before the coming of this day young and old are busy looking after their flower beds; they are watering, pruning, training the plants, and helping them to bloom luxuriantly. On Assumption noon, the choicest buds and blossoms are gathered and, with a streaming ribbon of silk or satin, tied into a bouquet. Then the maidens dressed in their best holiday attire, each carrying her "hallowed cluster," proceed to the church.

> From near and far, from vale and mountain-side,
> The landed man, the herdsman, peasant, maid,
> In toggery to boast their Alpine homes;
> With choicest flowers in clusters, wreaths, bouquets;
> The lily-white, the red, the azure-blue;
> In herbs and simples bound with costly bands;
> Devotionally their vying tributes bring.

Upon a signal, the radiant throng of maidens enter the church and march processionally up the aisles to the ringing of bells, whilst the jubilant organ with every stop and key, is loudly welcoming them as if it were their First Communion or Espousal Day. Up to the Blessed Lady's Altar, which for the occasion is rich in flowers and ablaze with lights, they march, where each in turn deposits at the foot of Mary's statue her floral offering. Dividing then to right and left into the seats reserved for them, they follow the ritual service by which the priest blesses and consecrates to the

Virgin Mother, their gifts—the choicest flowers and herbs from garden and field, gathered in her honor by her children.

Hardly is the beautiful ceremony ended, when the bells peal forth again and the vociferous organ, in concert with the mighty throng, sings out the grand Te Deum. Slowly and reverentially the white-robed girls approach the altar to take back from the Blessed Virgin's hand the bouquets they brought her; to take back the now hallowed flowers to their homes, where they will divide them, and as an omen of their Heavenly Mother's protection, will treasure a part of them in their dwelling houses, bless with another part their stables and barns, and scatter what is left of them over their fields.

This beautiful celebration originated in the hearts of the Catholic people themselves; it is nowhere officially recognized by the Church. But like so many other local Christian festivals and customs, it proves how the lives of these simple godfearing people, at home and on the field, are influenced by thoughts and ideas from the supernatural; and with what ingenuity they know how to blend the secular with the spiritual. God is their ever-present Father, and Mary, their ever-present loving Mother, not merely in church but in the home as well; not merely on Sundays but every day and at all times.

VIRGO GLORIOSA!

'Tis not within the power of man
To picture the all-graceful One;
But strive he must the best he can,
To emulate great Sirach's son:

Fair Cedar of the Libanus,
In stately, regnant, upward trend;
Palm of Cades, Sion's Cypress,
Virtued, bitter death to fend.

Thou lovely Rose of Jericho!
In emerald luxuriance;
Bounteous Olive drooping low,
Thy grace the golden gifts enhance.

Of myrrh, aloe and cinnamon,
Such fragrance round thy coming wells;
Odor of aromatic balm
And rose attar thy going tells.

Heav'n and earth are found in thee;
Unrivall'd thou in beauty art;
Thy body, full of grace, we see;
But none can know thy adornéd heart.

We'll image thee in form and face
Of earth- and heav'n-gifts the sum;
And tint and shade thy queenly grace
With charms thy tears on Calvary won.
But what image it be,
Is unworthy of thee,
Beautiful Mother,
Loveliest Maid!

ST. MARGARET'S SCHOOL

GOD LOVES ME, DO YOU?

God loves me, what a ravishing thought! And He loves you, He loves all. "What more should I have done to thee and have not done?" the Church on the great day of her mourning asks in the name of Christ the Savior. Indeed, what more could He have added to the supreme test of love of laying down His life for us on Mt. Calvary? The examples of perfect love which Jesus depicts in those wonderful parables of the Father of the prodigal, of the Good Shepherd, of the King who forgave his servant ten thousand talents, are not drawn from real life. Such a father, such a shepherd and such a king, do not find their counterpart amongst men; they are verified and realized only in Christ the Savior.

There was one who practised charity of so noble and singular a kind as to deserve for all times the appelation "good." That Samaritan, namely, who on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho espied a man lying by the roadside dying from wounds which had been inflicted on him by robbers; after giving the wounded Jew what help he could, this kind stranger brought him upon his beast to an inn where he left him. "Take care of him," he said to the innkeeper, "and whatsoever thou shalt spend in his behalf, I at my return will repay thee."

But what, after all, is this injunction of disinterested charity, "Take care of him and I will repay you," in comparison with the words of the infinitely good Savior: "What ye do to the least of My brethren ye do to Me?" Was there ever a philosopher, a philanthropist, a benefactor of mankind, who uttered anything so sublime? The saints and the saints alone approached their Divine Exemplar in a way: they begged of God to be permitted to expiate in their own person the debt which their fellowmen owed Divine Justice; they inclosed and isolated themselves in pestilential rooms with their afflicted brethren to assist and encourage them; they even sold themselves into slavery as substitutes for others. These acts were in truth heroic. But all the same their charity was only that of an equal to an equal. The words, "What ye do to the least of My brethren, ye do to Me," speak of an infinite love and mark the difference that exists between the charity of God and of man.

We admit then that God loves us infinitely; but why should we love our neighbor as ourselves or love him at all? A reason not much higher than that of philanthropy would be the motive of pity. "Natural Philosophy says: This drop of water contains worlds of animalculae of all sorts and we wonder. But who will tell by a nomenclature no less interesting the myriads of thoughts, of feelings, contained in one tear? in the sadness, if we only knew it, which fills every human heart?"—Roux. If we knew, we would not simply wonder, we would commiserate and love; most assuredly we

would not, we could not then, envy and dislike and hate our brother. Ordinarily an infidel can teach us nothing. But there is one, Goodwin by name, the author of Caleb Williams and other novels, to whom upon the authority of Charles Dana, we are indebted for the following powerful and suggestive invention. He is describing the relation that exists between a tutor and his pupil. He says, that the conviction the tutor was under that both he and his pupil would before long have to appear in the presence of the same Judge and that both alike were awaiting a state of eternal happiness or eternal misery mellowed his morose and harsh disposition and made him kind and considerate to the boy.

Charity is not the same as philanthropy. The former is grounded upon the love of God and is supernatural; the latter is a natural virtue for it springs from mere natural sentiment and emotion and is suggested by nothing higher than humor or motives of utility. Because God is the Father of all we are all His children, therefore, brethren one to another. God made all men to His image and this image can never be totally obliterated no matter how low a man may sink through ignorance and vice. Christ shed His blood to redeem all men; but to have paid an infinite price to save men proves that He loves them infinitely. God is love; heaven is the home of love and this earth is the threshold of heaven; however, this earth cannot be that, unless charity which is consummate in heaven above, is at least initial here below. Therefore, him, our brother, whom God made to His image and redeemed and loved,

we must love if we love God. For, says St. John, "If any man say I love God and hateth his brother he is a liar." But do we love our brother?

It was in some magazine or review that I came across a thought worthy to be ranked with Pascal's Pensées. "When I learned how the stars are grouped into constellations yet every star at an immense distance from every other, I said, 'In all nature there is nothing like this.' But when I came to know men, women and children; when I saw how they are grouped in families and bound together by social ties, yet every one living at an immense distance from every other, a world in himself, I said, 'This is like it.' "

Charity is not natural to man. "I give you a new commandment," said Christ. Children and savages are naturally cruel. Cain's insolent reply to the question of his Creator, "Where is thy brother Abel?" epitomizes the conduct of man to man through all ages: "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" The history of the world is largely a development of this selfish answer.

No virtue is more earnestly enjoined, more highly extolled and promised a greater reward by Christ, than Charity; no virtue is more universally admired and praised by men. And yet it is the rarest of virtues because it is rooted in humility, and humility is alien to our fallen nature leavened through with pride. It is the hardest of virtues because it supposes sacrifice and our corrupt nature is thoroughly selfish. However, it is for us to listen and to obey; the words of Christ

are imperative and final and will stand for or against us for time and eternity: "I give you a new commandment: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another." John xiii:34.

CONTRAST.

Offend the equal man,
He casts, by vengeful art,
Overt or subtle plan,
Thee from his heart.

Offend the Mighty God,
Quick vengeance He will start,
Driving with urging rod,
Thee to His heart.

WHY DO YOU NOT PRAY?

A great many touching and instructive incidents and episodes of a religious character have come to my notice in different ways, which, on account of the time that has elapsed since I read about or witnessed them, my memory can recall only in a blurred way when there is question of the circumstances of name, time and place.

A merchant from a country town, accompanied by his daughter, a child of about ten years of age, put up in a hotel of a large city which he was visiting on business. At the noon hour he and his child sat down to table in the handsome, spacious dining room of the hostelry. As the dinner was being served them, the little girl who had come from a thorough Catholic home where table prayers were a matter of course, got up and totally unconscious of the many guests dining and chatting 'round about her, began in a clear, ringing voice to say her Grace aloud. Instantly, as if under the spell of a spectre's wand, the dining room was hushed to silence. Men and women searched with inquiring eyes whence the startling but musical recitative was coming; then they looked at each other astonished, abashed, confounded; and as the tiny silvery voice was uttering slowly and distinctly, word upon word of the beautiful and expressive Catholic prayer, many a head was bowed in response and many an eye moist with

tears. When she had finished and had sat down to begin her meal, it was a minute or two still before the silence which held the promiscuous gathering in thrall, was broken by even a sound or a word. This was the silent and instructive tribute of awe and respect which the worldly wise paid, which men always involuntarily pay to artless innocence in the act of prayer. Let us hope that to many a one in that dining hall the example of the pious girl was of lasting value: if so, then were the words of Daniel in the sense we choose to take them, again confirmed: "And a little child shall lead them." Dan.xi:6.

It is one of the proofs of the reasonableness and necessity of prayer that children take to it so readily and understandingly. Edward Bulwer-Lytton, somewhere, I think in his book "A Strange Story," says appositely to my subject: "Look at the infant praying to the invisible God at its mother's knees. This idea so superlatively abstract, of a Power that the infant has never seen, that cannot be explained to it by the most erudite sage, it grasps with an intuitive spring of its intellect; to this Power the innocent child prays with the most facile readiness, at the first glimpse of its reasoning faculties, before you can teach it a rule in addition or even a letter of the alphabet," with the conviction that this Power, God, hears, loves and watches over it.

Abstracting for the moment from what Revelation and the Church teach about Prayer, it is upon the fact, that of all creatures here below man alone possesses the

faculty and the impulse to pray, a capacity of which there is not even a trace apparent in any of the inferior races, that Reason proves man ought and must pray.

What Christ and His Church and the saints have said in regard to the excellence and the necessity of Prayer is known to every Christian, no matter how elementary his knowledge of Religion may be. The Christian knows that when he is urged to pray it is not for God's sake but for his own; that having a right to call God his Father, he has the claim upon Him of a child. He knows moreover, that Christ, Who promised to hear every prayer, will do so in the most salutary way, but in His own way; for surely when Jesus said, "Come to me all ye that labor and are burdened and I will refresh you," He was not speaking of a refreshment of food and drink only. And lastly, the Christian knows that the devils are creatures but not children of God; and lost souls and souls in mortal sin are not. That therefore when he prays he must inquire whether he has a claim to be called a child of God; if not, then let him read the words in Isaias, i:15: When you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away my eyes from you; and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear . . . wash yourselves and be clean; take away the evil of your devices from my eyes; cease to do perversely . . . then come . . . and if your sins be red as crimson they shall be white as wool."

And old saintly Brother, a member of St. Bede Abbey, remarked to me that he had never known a candidate

or a novice of the Order to persevere unless he was much given to prayer. This may be neither a profound nor an original observation. But if as the Psalmist says, "Out of the mouths of infants and sucklings thou hast perfected praise," then, no doubt, from the unstudied words and the obscure example of some simple Brother, or God-fearing layman too, for all that, many a hint may be taken and lesson learnt which will confirm as powerfully as any argument, the teaching of the theologian. The words of the Brother have been verified over and over in the cloister as in the world. One who prays much no matter what his state in life, will always measure up to and be faithful to his vocation. It was an old French teacher who said—I do not know upon what authority—that when de Lamennais begged Pius VIII. for dispensation from the Breviary for himself and colaborers on the L'Avenir, the saintly pontiff wept. If such a request was really made, the Pope had reason to weep for it boded ill. There is no economy of time so false and pernicious as that made at the expense of the time allotted to prayer. Our Blessed Savior willed that the prayer of his followers be unceasing. And indeed, unceasing in fact, is the prayer of His faithful children. They pray working, and working, pray.

"Mother," said the boy Clement, on his way home from a little family party to which he had accompanied her, "what did the men playing cards mean, by saying, they were only trying to kill time?" "My son, they meant they had nothing else to do." "But if

they have nothing else to do, why don't they pray?" rejoined the precocious child, who today is known as St. Clement Hofbauer, the Apostle of Vienna. Work and prayer is the Christian ideal which he saw exemplified in his own home, which is exemplified in every good Christian home. It is the embodiment upon canvas of this idea of Work and Prayer, more than its artistic grace and value which, in the estimation of Christians at least has immortalized "The Angelus" of Millet.

Most men, however, never reach this ideal; but if they do not reach it they approach it in various degrees. Good men pray often, bad men, at least sometimes. Trials and calamities, the fear of death will force even the most stubborn to his knees. I borrow the following beautiful incident from Montalembert's "Monks of the West," it will summarize the above reflections. "At the apotheosis of the feudal age, when the fleet of Philip Augustus, sailing towards the Holy Land, was assailed in the Sicilian seas by a terrible tempest, the king reanimated courage and confidence in the breasts of the sailors by reminding them what intercessors they had left upon the soil of their country. 'It is midnight,' he said to them, 'it is the hour when the Community of Clairvaux arises to sing matins. These holy monks never forget us; they are going to appease Christ; they go to pray for us and their prayers will deliver us out of peril.'"

THE PLOWMAN'S PRAYER.

I.

Cantate Domino, canticum novum!
Blithely the soil to woo,
Sings he a-moiling,
Plods he hard toiling,
The plowman staid and true.
In silv'ry, fecund furrows break,
And show thy eager glebe awake,
O mother Earth!—in herb and fruit,
A new song Him thy fruitage bruit.
Cantate Domino,
Omnis terra!

II.

Cantate Domino, canticum novum!
Germule and seed laid low,
New life when breaking,
With your awaking
His love and pow'r will show.
How wondrous is the plowman's deed,
The miracle in sowing seed!
Each year a new hymn nature sings
To Him, the seedling quick'ning brings.
Jubilate Deo,
Omnis terra!

III.

Cantate Domino, canticum novum!
Bountiful God! benign!
Fields undulating,
Smiling, are waiting
The harvest-time.
The land sings out the season long

Its vernal, its autumnal song;
To Him all nature gladly brings
The choicest of her plenteous things.
Videte opera
Super terram!

IV.

Cantate Domino, canticum novum!
Plowman, honest and good!
Be you as willing,
Thorough in tilling,
A still more precious rood.
The earth will jubilate the Lord;
What paean sings your nobler heart?
Each year a higher song and new
To God, the Psalmist asks of you.
Cantate, psallite,
Qui fecit te!
Ps. 97.

"WORK AND PRAY!"

The Motto of St. Benedict and of the Benedictine Order.

THE DRONE:

Birdling! you restless, eager wight,
Why nest and rear you with a might,
A-feared to lose a day?
Think you this world a cage to be,
Sole-purposed for your progeny,
Where one must work, not play?

The brood for which you toil and sorrow,
Will surely leave you by tomorrow;
Wear not your life away.
You've moped the cruel winter long;
Come, idle these spring-days in song;
Live whilst you can, your May.

THE BIRD.

If kind, 'tis strange, now what you say;
So strange, it fills me with dismay;
Unwisdom here must lurk.
'Twas idling made the winter long;
When idling, then is hushed my song;
I joy and live in work.

My fledglings leave me on the morrow,
Yet what I give from them I borrow;
I in my offspring live;
And with me live in endless song
The birdling myriads in their young;
He dies who will not give.

SUBLIME CONFIDENCE.

The occasional stoicism of the proud and the languid stupor of the sensualist when they come to die is the very opposite of that sublime fortitude and resignation with which Christians, and among them those especially who have preserved their baptismal innocence, face the hour of death.

"Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place?" the Psalmist inquires; he answers: "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart."

In the passing from earth to heaven of the virginal soul Therese of Lisieux, a Carmelite nun popularly known as the Little Flower of Jesus, the Scriptural words just quoted have been verified, and what is remarkable, under circumstances which, excepting in the case of a saint, would be considered appalling. In the last stage of consumption, Therese, rapt in prayer, was lying awake one night upon her miserable pallet in the Carmel of Lisieux. Suddenly she felt a gush of warm blood welling up from her heart which, as it reached her lips, she caught up in a handkerchief. She knew what the hemmorage meant, namely, that it was an unmistakable summons from the Angel of Death. The poor maiden! Could the call have come at a more unpropitious time? It was midnight. Her dark cell was cold

and bare and she its only tenant. There was no Sister present who by discrediting the evidence or minimizing its import, might have quieted her fears or with holy suggestions revived her spirits if necessary. But was she frightened and disheartened? Did beads of cold perspiration press from her brow? Not at all. She relates that at the moment when her life-blood was gushing from her mouth she felt like screaming for joy because the hour of her release from this world had come. So great was this joy that from its very excess she would not strike a light and hesitated until break of day before she looked at the stained handkerchief, lest perhaps if the ruddy evidence upon which her hope was grounded were absent from it, her disappointment would be almost too great to bear. In the morning when the Mother Superior came to visit her, Therese holding up the blood-stained linen, asked in all innocence: "Mother, is this the harbinger of death?" "Yes, my child," the Superior replied. This was glorious news indeed, and the saintly nun could not conceal her happiness. Then it was she expressed herself as many a sanctified soul before her had done, as the souls of the chaste and pure are especially privileged to do, in words like those of the Psalmist: "I was glad of the things that were said unto me. We shall go into the house of the Lord."

It is the common experience of priests everywhere to observe that when God calls a parishioner, man or woman, to eternity by death, the sick person in nearly every case, providing he was a good Catholic, is not startled or even flurried, but goes about making ready

as if he were setting out on some ordinary journey. "Listen," said the Father Provincial, at the deathbed of St. Aloysius, "he speaks of going to heaven as we should of a journey to Frascati." It is the author of the Life of Mary Mother Therese of Vienna, I think, who says, beautifully: "Nothing extraordinary marks the death of Christians except what astonishes those who see nothing beyond the present life. I mean the serenity of a soul which abandons this world without an effort. The Sacraments ardently desired, hailed with faith, received with love; the calm with which the preparations for death are made and the last tender adieus are given; the firm and tranquil hope of a future reunion; one last look at that past which it is hoped God has purified, then forever turned from visible things to fix itself on the bright dawn of eternal realities; the hands twined around the crucifix, the lips murmuring a last prayer; in a word, the soul peacefully recollected waiting for the last sigh—such is the sight and such the incidents which make a Christian's death the astonishment of the impious, the consolation of the just, and one of the most eloquent witnesses which God gives of Himself here below!"

As bearing upon the above, the following letter which I copy from the Life of Cardinal Vaughan will be welcome. It is a letter which his Sister Clare, a nun at Amiens, wrote to an uncle shortly before her death in January, 1862:

"I would certainly have written to you before this and thanked you for your two letters but you do not

know that during the great Advent of St. Martin which begins on All-Saints and lasts until Christmas we are not allowed to write letters though we may receive them. I am astonished that I have enough patience to explain all this to you when I have such glorious news to tell you—namely that I may hope in a very short time, in a few days, perhaps, to see my Celestial Spouse in heaven and to gaze forever on that Face the beauty of which no words can tell. I am writing to you from my bed, ill in the infirmary. The doctor came to see me last Saturday and said that my recovery was an impossibility, and that I might at any time receive Extreme Unction. He says that not only my chest but everything in my body is attacked."

What a proof of the divinity of our Holy Religion! What a proof of the infinite mercy of God towards his children; and oh! the confidence, merited by purity of life, which is here in evidence. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

HOLY NAME.

In the city of Bonn some years ago a surgeon was about to perform an operation on a poor peasant, suffering from a cancer of the tongue, who could neither read nor write. A number of medical students were in attendance. The surgeon warned the patient that the operation meant the certain loss of speech during the rest of his life. "If you have anything to say, do so now," he added. "They will be the last words you will ever pronounce." The spectators waited in silence for the answer. For a moment the poor man bent his head in thought, then with a touching accent of faith he exclaimed: "Praise be to Jesus Christ forever." These were his last words.

We have on record the last words of many great and holy men. Those spoken by St. Stephen at his death, "Lord Jesus Christ, lay this not to their charge!" are sublime. Those of St. Martin of Tours: "O Lord, if I be still needful to Thy people I refuse not to work!" are heroic. Among saintlike men, sweet and consoling are the last words of Bishop Bruté: "I am going home!" Quite similar but with an added charm Cardinal Wiseman expressed himself: "I feel like a boy going home for his vacation." However, among all the Last Sayings nothing seems to me so beautiful and reassuring as is the final utterance of the learned Suarez: "I did not know it was so sweet to die!"

The character of Last Words varies, as does the moral state of those who give them utterance. Some are candid and convincing, some presumptuous and deceptive; and some again, mythical as to fact, or like the famous phrase "More Light!" of Goethe, mythical when burdened with an interpretation which sane criticism rejects.

The ordinary Christian, Catholic or Protestant, on his deathbed, if he moralizes at all does so in a mood generally remorseful or admonitory. And herein lies a lesson. "Lockhart," said Walter Scott to his son-in-law: "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here."

Alexandrine d'Alopeus of Lutheran birth, the daughter of the Russian Minister at Berlin, was married to Albert de la Ferronnays, son of the French Ambassador at Rome; at her husband's death she became a Catholic. As a widow she divested herself of all her wealth in favor of the poor and having spent her life in acts of heroic poverty, prayer and charity, she died the death of the saints in Paris, 1848.

Whilst still a Lutheran and before Montalembert had gauged her candor of soul and deep religiosity, he was scandalized when informed that Alexandrine was in the habit of singing in its German version the incomparable hymn of St. Bernard, Jesu dulcis memoria. He considered it almost a profanation. But shortly after when with his own ears he heard the maiden and

observed with what reverence and piety she sang it he was pleased and edified.

The point is this: not the words in themselves but the disposition of the heart which utters them, is the factor which constitutes them a prayer acceptable to God or not. It is not the circumstance of time solely or chiefly which accredits the Last Words with a special virtue.

Many an infidel and unrepentant sinner finished his life vociferously calling upon God with Last Words as orthodox and pious as were those of Antiochus and with as little avail. After all, this is the truth, that our words and prayers whether in the prime of life or at its close will be appraised for better or worse, in accordance with life's religious tenor. It is only he bearing Jesus in his heart who can confidently die with "Jesus" on his lips.

If our words truthfully report our life, then the most expressive words we can choose at its end will be those of the Psalmist: "My heart is ready, O my God, my heart is ready!" Our Catholic people have all their life made the sentiment of the Psalmist their own; ready to go, ready to stay, as God wills; therefore even to their last breath when the eye is already glazing in death, the clammy lips still utter: "As God wills! As God wills!"

"MORE LIGHT."

Goethe's last Words;
Vide Lewis.

Real or mythical?
Vide Baumgartner-Stockman.

Born with the fairest gifts bedight,
'Tis strange, he whom the Muses claim,
Found life so darksome in the main,
And dying, sobbed: "More light!"

In life it is of wondrous might
To pray, "Lord, grant that I may see!"
But he who chooses blind to be
Is doubly sealed 'gainst light.

Within thy grasp, within thy sight,
Truth pleading stood, now bright, now faint;
Not Stolberg, Gallitzin, sage, nor saint,
Could lead thee on toward light.

Erratic meteor of the night,
Which o'er the Court of Weimar shone!
From darkness great to greater won
Its halls, thy baleful light.

Alas, great Goethe! satellites
Around thee move, a blasted sun;
Bedizened men to this day run,
Thy orbit minus light.

In downward not in upward flight
Thy prose and verse does subtly reign,
To lure with sweet erotic pain,
Sick Werthers from the light.

In thee Voltaire, Rousseau, unite,
The scoffer and the sensualist;
To Wilhelm Meister and his list,
"Last Words," will not bring light.

Nor yet to thee, long-wed to Night.
In this thy pray'r lacks truth and form:
A soul 'mid doleful shades forlorn,
Wants light, before "More light."

THE HORN OF THE ALPS.

In the mountainous districts of Switzerland, the cattle, the sheep, and the goats, recognize and respond to the tooting of the Alpine horn, as readily as if it were their master's voice. But besides giving out the shepherd's call the mountain bugle serves also a higher purpose. As soon as the sun has disappeared from the valleys and his last rays rest glimmering on the mountain-tops, the herdman who dwells on the highest peak, takes up his horn and sings out: "Praise ye the Lord, our God!" Immediately his fellows within the nearest circuit answer with pipe and horn: "Praise ye the Lord!" From every vantage point of bluff and rocky pinnacle, the invitation is then taken up and sent upward and onward and back and forth by all the mountaineers, so that for a quarter of an hour and longer, glen and recess, valley and mountain-side, ring with the praises of God and the echo's call, "Praise ye the Lord! Ye the Lord! The Lord!"

This jubilee of praise is followed by a solemn stillness during which herdman and shepherd upon their knees with uncovered heads are fervently saying their Night Prayers. By this time it is grown quite dark. Again the sentinel aloft on his airy perch raises the horn to his lips and bugles to all the watchers near and far: "Good Night!" "Good Night," the mountains

echo and re-echo, and all is silent; man and boy are making ready for sleep.

What a beautiful Catholic custom! What have the infidel literati and the arrogant philosophists of the day to substitute for a practice so beautful and reasonable? Through the mouth of Isaias will the Lord rebuke the stolid indifference and more than brutish ingratitude of those who rise to eat and lie down to sleep without ever a thought of Him Who is the Author and Giver of all good things. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel hath not known Me and My people hath not understood." Is. I.3. When these educated pagans on Judgment Day will stand side by side with the illiterates of Tyrol, they will be overwhelmed with shame and confusion to find that the first will be last and the last first.

HOMESICKNESS.

"Famished with nostalgia I once knelt all night at the porthole of my berth to watch the North Star rise over the ocean, after being hidden from my sight for three long years, to assure myself I was coming back to my own home and my own people," writes Mrs. H. Frazer in "A Diplomat's Wife." There is no place like home, we sing in the most popular of our national songs. We have two homes: that more comprehensive one we call our country and that more exclusive one, our father's house. Elia's appended condition, "There is no place like home, providing it is a home," may well apply to many a house and cottage, to many a district and province, in countries alienated from the Church; to apostate nations, which like the younger son in the parable, the prodigal, who, because he went out from his father's house, came to grief in a distant country and was forced to feed among swine. But the proviso of the genial essayist is superfluous and may in each and every case be dropped, if reference is made to a Catholic home either in its wider or in its restricted sense.

I have read how home melodies affect the exile to tears, yea, to frenzy; how the herdman of the Alps upon hearing the Ranz des Vaches—the shepherd's song —will, even if he be an enlisted soldier and in spite of

the penalty of death attached to the offence, desert his company, to steal homeward. So irresistible is the longing for home which this shepherd-song enkindles in the hearts of the Alpine mountaineer, that the military authorities were compelled to exclude it from the camp. And no wonder. The traveler yields to the charm of the ingratiating customs, and the casual visitor is impressed with the poetry everywhere discernible in the religious life of a Catholic country, and they cannot help but love a country and a people whose faith and morals are imbedded in and expressed by a wonderful variety of beautiful and poetical conceptions.

Along the highways and byways the image of Christ crucified and statues of the Blessed Virgin Mother are set up in arborial chapels and wayside oratories, where tarrying a moment, the wanderer and the laborer may fortify their patience and gather solace and strength in the performance of their daily task. So also, and particularly in Brittany, in Switzerland, and in the uplands and lowlands of Germany, within many a gable-niche some devotional statue is enshrined and above many a portal and doorway is affixed some artistic scroll or painted inscription with such like or other device: "May God bless our little home!"

"Place Thou Thy saving hand
Upon this little home,
In this my Alpine-land!"

"To all who dwell beneath this roof
Give of Thy love, sweet Jesus, proof!"

A home over the entrance to which such an inscription is found is a home indeed, no matter how poor; for it is a home within which faith and virtue live and thrive. Such a home is a Christian home and therefore the type and the promise of that happy eternal home of heaven, for which petition is daily made in the "Our Father." But if a man has every reason then, to love and live and die for such a blessed earthly home and his heart pines and breaks when he is forced to leave it or is separated from it, what must be the longing of the saints on earth and in Purgatory, for their home in heaven? Some such longing is found in every pure heart burning with the love of God. "O God, my God: to Thee do I watch at break of day. My soul hath thirsted for thee; my flesh also, in ways how manifold!"

THE SHEPHERD'S RUSE.

Part One.

In summer, the high pastures of the Alpine Regions, eight or nine thousand feet up among the scattered plains and small plateaus of the mountains, from the uppermost line of trees to the land of perpetual snows, are covered with large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats.

Where the means of subsistence for man and beast are so scarce and precarious as throughout all this region, herdsmen and shepherds secure every blade of grass they espy. Aware that the goat is the most agile and sure-footed among animals, the shepherds reserve for it those pastures only which are inaccessible to sheep and cattle. No range is too precipitous for the goat to scale; hardly a chasm too wide it will not leap.

Its venturesomeness, however, disappears, when it is accompanied to the pasturage by its young. The sagacious animal will not attempt to make the rocky shelf or measure a gap which instinct tells it is beyond the strength of the kid at its side. But the luscious grass in patches, no matter how small, no matter where, must be harvested in some way, but how?

The shepherd picks up the kid and lifts it to some inviting ledge or tosses it across a chasm where tufts of grass abound. No sooner is this done than the mother follows.

How often does not the Good Shepherd avail Himself of a ruse like that of the Alpine herdsman? Snatching from us by death some dearly beloved one, He compels us to look upward and follow. Or by depriving us of health, or wealth, or position, in a word, of something or everything to which we are too much attached, He urges, nay, forces us to aspire to higher things; to seek contentment and happiness where alone it can be found, in heaven. Or again, He places before us the example of a holy life unfolding in our proximity or under our very roof, and we marvel at the deed of charity, of prayer, of abnegation and sacrifice, we see before our eyes. Shame and confusion at our cowardice, admiration for the courageous virtue of our fellow mortal, makes us introspective; impelled by an honest will and the grace of God we ask as did St. Augustine upon reading the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert: "If these and those could do it, why not I?"

Thus are the words of the Psalmist verified: "The Lord is my Shepherd and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture."

Part Two. Premature Death.

God is The Beautiful, The Good, The True. Heaven is beautiful because He dwells there and the radiance of His attributes are its light and happines. The earth is beautiful, because God made it. Whatever God makes is beautiful. But all things in heaven and earth are beautiful only with a borrowed beauty; borrowed

from God in Whom Beauty exists in its essence. These three attributes of God suppose and include one another. The good is beautiful, and truth is both. It is in this comprehensive sense, I am using the word "beauty."

God loves the beautiful because it is in some degree a reflection of Himself. Beauty is at home in heaven, it thrives only as an exotic here on earth. For this world of ours was cursed in the sin of Adam and Eve and although this curse was lifted by the Redeemer, many of its effects still remain. Beauty therefore lingers here below reluctantly; it is ever pining for its native home. That is the reason perhaps that what is most beautiful, oftentimes has the briefest life.

The flower retains its perfect bloom but for a moment. The star ascends to its meridian and twinkles there but for an instant. The gorgeous butterfly and gaudy ephemera, sunrise and sunset, appear and quickly disappear. It is so amongst men. Beauty seems to attach itself with predilection precisely to that age, that sex, that constitution, which according to the laws of nature, is frail, fleeting and transitory.

Who has never remarked, with what ethereal beauty the hectic flush mantles the countenance of youth and maiden who are wasting away under some pulmonary disease? Or the transfiguration of the human countenance at death, with a momentary beauty singularly delicate and refined, during that brief space of time that intervenes between the passing of the soul and before active dissolution sets in? The indulgent reader

will permit me to condense these reflections into a few lines of poetry:

How enchanting moves the bell-like pleading,
when the boy soul-free his discant sings;
Not the cultured note of the soprano pleasing,
thrills, as when his fleeting treble rings.
Rainbow tints and clouds in golden vesture;
lily, rose and jewel-bedecked toys;
All that's sweetest, loveliest in nature,
destiny in briefest with them joys.
Then is beauty oft at highest flow'ring,
when the face red-glows in hectic flush;
Thus the body speaks the soul's last greeting—
e'en the sun so parts with twilight blush.
Wreathed in death, the maid with crown of myrtle,
welcomes beauty to her silent fane;
Beauty mantles with ethereal graces,
form and feature marred by dying-pain.

It is because God loves Himself, He loves the beautiful which is a reflection of Himself. Therefore, by predilection He loves children: "Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come to Me." Beauty is the natural prerogative of infancy, of childhood and youth; this is not so much in a physical as in a spiritual sense. It is the innocence of the soul peering through the eyes and over-playing the countenance that gives such special charm to the beauty of adolescence. God, therefore, is partial to children; the brightness of their unflecked souls attracts Him. Like the provident gardener who secures the opening bud and nascent bloom before an insect can touch or some noxious vapor injure

it, God delights in transplanting from this earthly to His heavenly garden the flowers of baptismal innocence. The half of redeemed humanity in the Church triumphant is made up of children. "For the kingdom of Heaven is for such."

There is a double providence in the act of the Good Shepherd when from among His flock He singles out a weanling in this home or a lamb in that, and helps it across the chasm of life to a higher and better pasturage beyond. The death of a baptized child is always blessed, that of a youth or maiden, with rare exceptions, equally so. It is a double providence because it brings infinite happiness to the favored soul that is called hence, and a blessing to that earthly circle of which that soul, whilst in the body, formed a link. The eyes of those who are left behind will be directed upward to heaven.

The transplanting of children from earth to heaven by the hand of death is a grace of Divine favoritism. It is true the young have little or no fruit to show; but it is also true, that as many a plant is appreciated more for its bloom than for its fruit, so many a youth cut off in the opening of life is more esteemed in the flower by God and man, than he would be in the tainted fruit of maturity. Holy innocence untarnished by any grievous sin is a great spiritual asset. This innocence when it is lost, is not always recovered, and even when it is regained, it will take many good works to arrive again at the measure and degree of pristine love. We know from personal experience how few are

the good works even a long life has to show and how numerous are the bad. "Oh, that I had died when a child!" is an exclamation uttered time and again by men and women of all classes. "He pleased God and was beloved of Him, so that living among sinners, he was translated. He was taken away speedily lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. . . . He being made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time, for his soul pleased the Lord; therefore hastened He to take him away from among the wicked." So we read in the fourth chapter of the Book of Wisdom. Looking over the record of many a human life, we are justified in saying, "Would that he had died in childhood or at such or such a time, rather than at the hour decreed for him.

I will take an example from Church History. It is not that of a child but of a man in his prime. Nor need this surprise the reader. The sick child recovers or it dies. If it dies it is saved; if it gets well and grows to maturity its ultimate fate, whatever it may be, interests few or no one, and is not taken notice of by history. My purpose is merely to show that it is well not to sorrow inordinately, neither when God designs to call a child to heaven, nor when He calls an adult who is prepared; that there are motives of profound gratitude at hand to mellow grief, among which this is one not to be overlooked, namely, that the fair promises of the present are quite frequently frustrated, and that the roseate expectations for the future may never be realized.

Félicité Robert de Lamennais, after a stained and erratic youth, was induced by well-meaning friends to study for the Priesthood. It was a pity. And all the greater pity, when upon his ordination, the recent convert, the reluctant priestly candidate, one who had but lately and with difficulty been rescued from the peril of skepticism and unbelief; a man without any systematic study, without any thorough grounding in philosophy or theology, was without preliminary trial, made the oracle and spokesman of Catholic France. It is true that his life as a priest, at least in the beginning, was exemplary; but humility and those virtues which foster the spiritual life must have been either wholly lacking in him or without adequate foundation. He was brilliant but not deep; a litterateur but nothing more. Upon the wings of an intemperate zeal his rise into the lurid ecclesiastical skies of the France of 1818 was spectacular and brilliant like that of a rocket; and like the charred shaft of a spent rocket was his inglorious fall. He fell through pride. It was in 1827 and before his fall, that Félicité lay on his deathbed. His saintly brother John was at his side. Holding in his hands a Rosary—a parting gift from Leo XII. at his last audience with him at Rome—he said to his Reverend Brother, who was a priest: "I am leaving you as my heritage, the most precious gift on earth, the gift to defend the faith." Whether it was in answer to the many prayers that were offered up for his recovery—who can tell—de Lamennais got well.

Just twenty-five years later, in 1854, he was again on his deathbed. His saintly brother was absent from it and all his former Catholic admirers and friends. Nor was any priest present to attend him, for he wanted none. With the exception of his faithful niece, who tearfully implored him but without avail to return to God, he was surrounded only by men who hated God and His Church. And so it happened that the once redoubtable champion of the Church, without giving a sign of sorrow or uttering a word of contrition, died a Pantheist, an enemy of the Church, with the stigma of an apostate upon him. As an apostate he was buried without priest, candle, or prayer.

Now, how does this example bear out the reflections above? It proves that the promise given in early life or at any time in life, is not always realized. It proves that a death in the grace of God, whether it come in youth or in the flower of life, is a blessing; and that the sorrow we feel when a relative or friend, or we ourselves, are summoned out of life, spiritually well-provided but prematurely, as the expression goes, is not justified, if it springs solely from the delusive hope of the good that with length of years would have been done which now will never be accomplished. We may well feel regret for what we have left undone in the past but as to the future God knows what is for our best. It proves lastly that when importuning heaven for one sick unto death we do so discreetly and in a Christian manner. Christ's prayer must be our model: "O my Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

SIMPLE FAITH IN REAL LIFE.

Beautiful Customs.

The child so absolutely dependent upon its father, if left to follow the impulse of its nature, will rush forth in an ecstasy of joy when it sees him in the distance, in order to welcome him and to be enclasped in his arms. This impulse, so common to all children, is in evidence everywhere, but beautifully and touchingly modified, as the place of residence and occupation of their parents render necessary.

In the mountainous districts of the Tyrol where the pathways are tortuous and oftentimes precipitous, and where the shepherd in care of his flock is bound for weeks at a time to his distant Alpine hut, the children come out when it is bedtime and, standing upon some prominence, sing out a Catholic hymn or a national song. Not until they hear the alternate verse from father or brother come back to them from the adjacent hills, are they satisfied and will they return home.

It is the same custom which Pierre Loti had observed in Brittany but the full significance of which he failed to understand; a custom so eloquent of filial piety and of Catholic faith, that we cannot help but love and respect Yann, "the Iceland Fisherman," and all his fellows pursuing the same livelihood, whether Breton or Levantine.

On the shores of the Adriatic the wives of the fishermen, whose husbands have gone far out upon the deep, are in the habit when evening has come of going down to the sea-shore and singing the first stanza of a hymn to the Virgin Mother or to Sancta Lucia; after they have sung it they will eagerly listen till they hear, borne by the wind across the desert sea, the second stanza taken up in response by their gallant husbands as they are tossed by the gale upon the waves, and then both are happy.

And we, if we but listened, might also at times upon this borderland between time and eternity hear within our hearts, in answer to our prayers, the sweet refrain with its message of hope, of comfort, of assurance, wafted down to us from our Heavenly Father's home, by our kindred who have gone before.

DO IT YOURSELF!

You will find the story somewhere in Jean Ingelow. Its kernel is this. Far beyond the north of Scotland and half a mile out from the Orkney Islands, a grim shaft of stone, called the Lonely Rock, very dangerous to navigators, rises above the surface of the Atlantic. One night, in a cottage by the sea, a young girl was feverishly plying her spinning-wheel while she anxiously listened to the whistling of the winds and the roar of the breaking waves. The long, long night came to an end at last. With the dawn, the boats of all the fishermen had returned to their landings but one; that one was her father's. Late in the day his body was found washed ashore on Lonely Rock. Much sympathy, of course, was extended to the girl by her island neighbors at her terrible loss, and equally, as was usual when disasters of the kind, by no means infrequent among them, occurred, many imprecations were heaped upon the Government for permitting so dangerous a rock to remain unguarded. Having done these two things the fisherfolk fell back into their old routine of life; but not so the fisherman's daughter. It is true, she spun her hanks of yarn as before, but over and above what was necessary for her living, she spun a hank or two more for the price of a daily candle. This she set up in her casement and watched and kept bright aflame the whole

night through. And every night, from the day of her father's burial, for full fifty years, through maidenhood, to maturity, unto old age, her beacon light sped its rays out upon the deep; upon the dread and mysterious floods lulled to sleep in their ocean bed, or lashed to fury by equinoctial gales or capricious summer storms. In rain and snow or driving sleet, in wild and angry weather, the mariner in his ship or the fisherman in his cockle-shell, had but to steer directly toward that vigil light to come safely into harbor. This was heroism in little things, heroism in humble life.

I took up this story not because examples of heroic devotion and sacrifice are few and hard to find but on account of the singular lesson this particular instance contains; and yet I think it is safe to say, that every act of heroism in the moral order teaches the same singular lesson; this singular lesson may be compressed into the three words. Do it yourself! to rail at the inefficiency of those in authority, to rave about the evils of the age, to bewail the corruption of society, to deplore the godless morality concealed in books and exhibited on the stage, to grieve over the religious indifference of the masses, may proceed from motives which are laudable and rest upon grounds that are solid. But what do these Jeremiads of accusation and complaints effect? All this multitude of words is, to quote an expressive scriptual phrase: Sound and nothing more.

If you wish to set the world aright, begin by doing right yourself. If not then leave the preaching to the

pulpit where it properly belongs. One saint in a parish no matter how lukewarm, will reform it. The words of Emerson, that the world will wear itself a beaten path to the hut, even if it be hidden in the wilderness, of the man who possesses even one gift in a preeminent degree, has been verified over and over again. The road from Lyon to Ars in 1818 was practically unknown to, and untravelled by the public; by 1830 there were five services by conveyances each day, carrying to that wretched village of the Dombes, part of the sixty to eighty thousand pilgrims, who, from every country in the world annually visited Ars to consult and to confess to its saintly curé.

Religious indifference, no doubt, is a very common evil and it is a very dangerous evil. Let him who sincerely bewails this indifference so common, remedy it as far as he can, by becoming a pattern of ardent faith and signal virtue. Every exceptional act of virtue will help.

Maris Eustelle Harpain, a peasant girl of Saint-Paillais, was invited with all her village companions to a ball and supper, Shrove Tuesday night. What such an invitation meant to the youth of a rural town in France, or for that matter, in any part of Europe, can hardly be imagined by the young people of America. Abstracting from the spiritual comfort and relaxation which Holy Religion and religious festivals brought them, the peasants of Europe seventy-five and fifty years ago, knew little of life beyond hard work, meagre food and little sleep. A dance, therefore, to be

followed by a rich, plentiful supper, was a festival none would miss.

The ballroom accordingly, was crowded; and among all the village maidens, Eustelle, innocent and pleasure-loving like the rest, was the queen and cynosure of eyes on account of her mental and physical gifts. Hour after hour the dance went on without ever a halt or stop. It was long past eleven when supper was announced and nearly twelve when the tired, hungry, eager guests, sat down to table. But they hardly had time to scan with delighted eyes the inviting dishes before them, and just as they were beginning to help themselves and to eat, lo and behold! the church-clock began tolling the fateful twelve. "Twelve o'clock! alas! Shrove Tuesday is out! Ash Wednesday is in! A fast and abstinence day! Why did they not serve supper sooner!" Eustelle exclaimed, as with disappointed look she lowered the poised fork with its tempting morsel to her plate. Her companions looked at her with a dubious smile, questioningly. "It is not Ash Wednesday yet; why it is still night; only after we have gone home and have slept, then, when we get up in the morning, and it is day, is it Ash Wednesday!" one and all spoke out, looking to their queen for confirmation of their half-formulated belief. The struggle was sharp but short within Eustelle's b-east; the convenient casuistry of her friends did not convince her. She got up with a smile and without a word of criticism or judgment of her neighbors, left the table and went into the ballroom. The rebuke of her example

was too palpable not to be felt. She was their idol no longer.

But from that hour of her noble resolve and brave sacrifice, her biographer dates her wondrous advance upon the road to sanctity. Long before her holy life came to its holy end, and especially after her death, the recollection of her triumph over human respect and her courageous obedience to the law of the Church that Ash Wednesday night, filled her friends and the strangers who heard of it, with admiration and edification; and God only knows, how many among them became more fervent Catholics in consequence.

So it is. If you sorrow to see your friends and neighbors so cold or careless in matters of Religion, make your grief of service to them by becoming more fervent yourself. In all their plans to reform society is not this the fatal error of demagogues and of all sectarians, that they wish to achieve their purpose, not by beginning this reform in their own hearts and permitting it to radiate therefrom upon others, but by fatuously throwing the whole burden of the reformation upon the Police and the Government? You complain of the corrupting influence that attaches to the theatre and to pleasure resorts. Would these places, could they, be so corrupting, if they were not patronized? And bad books and sensational papers, why do they continue to be published but for the reason that they are selling? No man who has not given himself unhesitatingly and without reserve to God can know the immense amount of good, which if God's designs had been fully complied

with, he would have accomplished. I will close these reflections with an example of heroism from our own day. Sir Richard Burton, the noted explorer, and, in the opinion of some, the greatest Oriental scholar England ever had, died in 1890. He was an indefatigable traveler and a voluminous recorder of what he had seen and experienced. He had planned as the crowning work of his life, a closely annotated translation of a strange Oriental manuscript entitled "The Scented Garden." His wife, who was a Catholic, tried to dissuade him from this, for although she was not permitted to read the manuscript, she had learned from his casual remarks, that the subject treated of was not only strange and curious but also obscene and pornographic to the highest degree. It is a problem for the psychologist to solve, that Sir Burton should choose a work of such a character for his masterpiece, for he was by no means a sensualist; on the contrary, he was rather austere and almost ascetic in his habits. But then the aberrations of the human mind are often beyond fathoming. After his death, "The Scented Garden," with his other manuscripts, came into the possession of his wife, Lady Burton. She suffered much agony of mind when brought in contact with the strange document and stood aghast at what she saw. Her mind was soon made up. Although fifteen hundred persons had promised subscriptions and she had received an offer of thirty thousand dollars for the manuscript from a publisher, she who was by no means rich, spurned the offer. She thought she could best benefit her fellowman and best

please God, by destroying it; and so taking the sheets from their receptacle she burnt them one by one, till all were consumed. The storm of criticism and vituperation which she expected in consequence of the holocaust she had offered up, was not slow in coming; but she faced it firmly and with dignity.

Now then, this act of Lady Burton, does it not speak in the interest of good books and in condemnation of bad ones, with an eloquence and effect equalling the genius of the Eagle of Meaux or the fiery zeal of the golden-mouthed Saint and Patriarch of Constantinople?

Therefore, do not leave the reform of abuses to others; correct them as far as possible by your example. You will then have done your duty and can leave the rest to God. Then again, even in regard to definite acts of good, begin with yourself first. It is a contemptible trait in husband or father, to be affable and obliging to friends and strangers, but gruff and silent and niggardly toward his family. It is abominable in the sight of God and man, for a wife or daughter to play Samaritan to the neighborhood and Levite in her own home. "Duty is a familiar word which has little effect on the ordinary mind; hence we have acts of generosity, self-denial, sacrifice, where smaller pain would constitute greater virtue." In each of the three examples above the wisdom and virtue of well-ordered zeal is manifested and the meaning of the sentence made plain, "Do it yourself!"

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER.

Cardinal Wiseman in Fabiola relates that a certain schoolmaster, Cassianus by name, who taught a class of two hundred pagan boys at Imola in the Romagna, having been accused of being a Christian, was brought to trial and condemned to death. His martyrdom was horribly or gloriously singular, as you choose to view it, in the circumstance that in accordance with the judicial decree which expressly commanded that it be done, his own pupils fell upon and hacked him to pieces with their styles. What Cassianus suffered physically and mentally from the ferocious conduct and appalling ingratitude of his pupils God only knows. That he forgave and prayed for them we are certain, for he is a blessed martyr at whose shrine even to this day pilgrims kneel and pray. The tragedy would be relieved with at least one ray of light, if we were as certain that the holy teacher before he closed his eyes in death, had the consoling assurance that the seed he had planted in those savage pagan hearts and was watering with his blood, would not despite present appearance, be wholly without fruit. It is quite probable that to perfect his sacrifice God withheld this knowledge from him. "The blood of martyrs," as Tertullian says, "is the seed of Christians"; if so, then the blood of martyrs, in accordance with the nature of seed, does not spring to

fruit on the instant of planting, but in the future. "I have planted," says St. Paul. "Apollo watered: but God gave the increase." No doubt in His own good time God brought to fruitage the tilling and watering of St. Cassianus.

How faithfully the story of St. Cassianus repeats itself daily in the apostolate of the Church! Today as then, the true Christian teacher exercises a zeal as eager and generous as was that of the schoolmaster of Imola. Children from every station in life, of all classes, of every disposition, with tendencies promising and disheartening, are welcomed to his class-room: the Catholic child, the Jew, the pagan, the rich and the poor, the physically and morally sound or defective. The cry of innocence or the appeal of ignorance suffices to open wide the door of education to all; none who have either plea to offer are excluded. But if his zeal is as all-comprehensive as that of the ancient martyr it is also as devoted and consuming. Look around and judge for yourself! Day and night in this one country of the United States alone, 40,000 Catholic teachers are spending themselves in the work of education: instructing, persuading, entreating, warning, admonishing, guiding the young. It is their sole interest in life. To this work they have solemnly vowed themselves; toward its accomplishment they strain all the powers of the body and every faculty of the soul. As was Cassianus in holy zeal so are the religious teachers of our day without stint or measure in sacrificing themselves. In the interest of children they have of-

fered up their lives. It is because they have pledged themselves for God's sake to pay this price in behalf of the little ones He so especially loved that, in furtherance of the work of education, no toil is too great or exhausting, no prospect too forbidding, no housing too poor, no place or locality untenable or too distant, no compensation too meagre. For the children's sake they become like children and "make themselves all to all to gain all to Christ."

The story of the Imola teacher finds its counterpart also in the fact that if the fruits of Christian Education are always abundant, it is seldom the teacher is present at the ingathering. In the sweat of his brow he sows the seed; with prayerful sighs and tears he waters it; the rest he leaves to God. The seed will come to harvest in due time.

It is not a difficult task to parallel a teacher's life with that of any martyr or confessor of the faith. To be refused the pleasure of seeing one's efforts ripen to maturity is one thing; to have one's efforts discredited and condemned as worthless or pernicious is quite another. Refused every testimony of love and gratitude, hampered by petty restrictions, falsely accused, persecuted, banished the country, thrown penniless upon a pitiless world, has been many a teacher's fate in our days; a fate not unlike that which befell his glorious predecessor fifteen hundred years ago.

St. Cassianus was the first teacher to die a martyr's death; but only the first in that long line of heroes and heroines who literally laid down their lives for their

children. Every country has its bead-roll of martyr-teachers, persecuted and put to death from sheer hatred of their holy profession by the enemies of God and man. Nor is it purely a coincidence that, as happened in the case of the Roman pedagogue, many a devoted school-master was martyred by his very pupils. "The servant is not above his master," said He who was crucified by His children. From Christ's Apostolic School went forth eleven apostles and one traitor. Out from our Catholic Schools have come the greatest benefactors of the human race, countless men and women illustrious for their learning and virtue, and thousands of saints; but traitors, also, black as Judas: Voltaires and Renans and Gambettas and Combes, who maligned and persecuted to exile and death the saintly benefactors to whom they were indebted for what they knew. However, although it is exceptional for a Christian teacher to be so signalized as was Cassianus by a quick and sharp martyrdom, a slow martyrdom is the glorious lot of one and all.

That beautiful myth about the pelican, the emblem of charity, feeding its young with blood from a wound in its breast, which is so sublimely realized by Christ in the Holy Eucharist, is applicable in a measure to every consecrated teacher who is faithful to the spirit of his exalted vocation. He is a pius pelicanus in truth, for with unstinted love and boundless generosity he drains to the limit his life-resources and nourishes with his own substance the fledglings of his nature and race. Since then the Christian teacher resembles in every way

his martyr-prototype Cassianus, he will like him receive a similar crown. For so says the Scripture: "They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity." Dan. xii. 3.

THE PEDAGOGUE'S HEART.

The truth of the Scriptural statement,
That the tongue speaks of what the heart 's full,
I meant by rare surgical treatment,
From the heart of a teacher to cull.

Of a teacher who without abatement
Had taught words and figures and signs;
His heart would be found,—as my case went—
Quite cicatrized with A B C lines.

So it proved; to my joy and amazement
It was zig-zagged with a script hard to solve;
Yet from under this scarréd defacement
Saw I beautiful legends evolve.

His heart to a quartered alignment
Gave to "Numbers" the privileged goal;
'Twas beneath this so-lettered assignment,
Stood the infinite price of a soul.

Deeply stamped on its waxen indulgence,
"History" held the next fourth of the whole;
From below which, came proofs urging credence,
There's no story like that of a soul.

"Grammar," the third lobe bore vaunting,
With nice speech and writing in toll;
Looking closer, I found here not wanting,—
The language of a heavenly soul.

Adjacent, "Geography" regnant,
Embracing equator and pole.
Interlinears o'er-ran this last segment,
About the world and the sphere of a soul.

Then seemed me the pedagogue's teaching
Unobtrusive indeed and undoled;
But as writ in his heart, so his preaching,
Of an infinite value untold.

ANTIPATHY.

"Do you believe that there are in our faces certain mystical signs which carry in them the matter of our soul?" asks Sir Thomas Brown. The question is too indefinite to answer but it will do to introduce the following reflections.

I do not wish to be facetious for agreeing with a statement by Lavater that there is a kind of nose worth a kingdom. There is some truth in it. The aquiline nose distinguishes the portrait of many a genius. Pascal touched upon this truth from another side when he said that had Cleopatra's nose been shorter the face of the world had been changed.

A good face means much. A face ill-shapen, bewrinkled and befurrowed, with a pair of languid or of restless squinting eyes, and mantled over with a sallow complexion, will repel everybody. If to the misfortune of such a face, you add an ungainly body, gruff speech, and graceless manners; be assured the possessor of it will invite an unfavorable judgment not only upon his person but also upon his character. Now reverse and enlarge the picture. Hazlitt speaks of a "constitutional talent" with which some men are dowered by nature. By the phrase constitutional talent, he understands a perfect physical organization: an open face and a tall, well-proportioned body of lordly bulk. Let

a man's intellectual gifts be ever so mediocre, a stately stature and girth and bovine health will help him more than even genius would, to ascend the pedestal; that is, to dominate over and to infuse respect into his fellowmen by words and actions, no matter how trite and shallow and commonplace. Does not the Scripture count it worth reckoning in favor of Saul the Benjamite, that "from his shoulders upward he appeared above all his people?"

One therefore who is prepossessing in size, contour, facial expression, and manners, will readily command attention and confidence. And yet appearances belie often. It is common enough in nature to find a rough shell enclose a sweet nut. In the mimic world many a great comedian diverts his audience with a lugubrious face; and on the stage and in literature, many a classic entertainer interests his clientele with satire, comedy and pleasantries, as did Cervantes, Molière, Swift and Hood, while his heart is chilled with melancholy and heavy with sadness. The Scriptural Goliath—what else had he to boast of but his size?

It is therefore as unfair as it is unreasonable to judge the state of a man's mind or soul from his features, whether comely or deformed. But there is a sympathy which makes us admire and there is an antipathy which makes us loathe a person upon first sight, the reason for which in the one case as in the other, it were hard to analyze. This first-sight judgment rests upon nothing more tangible than a something undefinable in the look, the words, the action, the pose, the very pres-

ence of the individual, on account of which we feel repelled or attracted to him. We act from a spiritual instinct or a kind of clairvoyance. To the soul jealous of its virtue, antipathy and sympathy are the two sentinels on watch to challenge every stranger who knocks at its portals.

Just as the beast of the field is taught to read the premonitory signs of the coming storm in order to protect itself and as the bird with extraordinary keenness detects the reptile lurking in the grass, so do virtuous souls in a way all their own, suspect the enemy upon the instant, under whatever guise he may show himself. As is the aspen leaf to the springtime zephyr, so are innocent souls sensitive to everything that breathes of sin. The trail of the serpent is everywhere in evidence; his taint and blight is over all. It is the merit of this preternatural sight called antipathy which helps the pure and the innocent to choose safely between book and book, and picture and play, and amusement and place and company, when no monitor or spiritual director is at hand to warn and advise. That this instinctive like and dislike may mislead at times we admit, but whether it err oftener than not, we question.

To some extent this sense of spiritual discernment is found in possession of all virtuous souls and especially of children. Children take readily to the guileless and innocent and only reluctantly to the corrupt and designing. Who has never been struck with the similarity of contour and profile in face and person, that exists between the Blessed Curè d'Ars and the

Sage of Ferney? Yet we are told that the children shunned and fled Voltaire when they met him in the royal parks of Sans Souci as they would have a wild ape emerged from his habitat; whereas the saintly Vianney had only to show himself and immediately he was thronged around by the young as is a father by his children. There is nothing so wonderful in this power of discrimination. Virtue as well as vice cannot be kept hidden in the heart; it reveals itself in many ways. Virtue by its very nature, attracts; vice repels. Ferney-Geneva, and Ars-Lyons are only a half-day's distance from each other; but the Ferney of 1750 was as far removed from the village of Ars in 1850, as is hell distant from heaven. It was from Ferney the apostle of infidelity scattered his seed of impurity and blasphemy broadcast over the world; it was at Ars that much of this wicked seed which had fallen into the hearts of many of those thousands and tens of thousands of pilgrims who annually visited the hamlet, was destroyed by the Apostle of the Confessional.

Is it ever possible to read the state of the soul from the body? Most assuredly. The Rev. Alban Stolz relates in his "Travels Through Spain," that he saw on exhibition in a picture gallery at Angers, France, a masterly representation in symbolism of a thoroughly good-for-nothing couple who, after a night of dissipation, find themselves under arrest. They and their associate debauchees are severally symbolized by a pig, a peacock, a goat, a dog, and a steer. The pig, for example, with its eyes almost buried in fat, is pictured

as just from its wallow. How fitting a type this of the man who in the quest of carnal indulgence blinds his soul and smothers it in flesh!

Does not the fixed gaze and impudent leer betray the impure? And does not the bloated face of the glutton proclaim the god he worships, who as St. Paul says, is his belly? Avarice and greed externalize themselves in the habits and habiliments of the miser. Envy and jealousy write themselves legibly over the sallow face.

There are then indeed, certain mystical signs—to answer Sir Thomas Brown in the affirmative—by which the state of the soul may be ascertained. How else can you explain what is so commonly related of all the saints of God, that at their very appearance in company, the ambiguous word was dropped, the suggestive story cut short? "Hush! Be careful! Here comes John or Aloysius, Agnes or Cecilia." What was it that forced this tribute of reverence not only from the good but from the indifferent as well, from the idler and from the street-gazer? Surely not the social or political position of the saint so dead to the world and the servant of all; not his palace, nor wealth, nor the style and texture of his garments; he who lived without comforts in a cell or cottage, and dressed as simply and poorly as decency would allow.

It was his virtue alone; the lustre of virtue and heavenly grace reflected in his face, in his words, in his whole demeanor, and which so impressed the spectator as if an angel were passing or nigh.

Let the worldling live in sin, it will not be with impunity; he will beastialize himself; then mockingly, ironically, nature will find him a counterpart amongst animals. But let a man live a Christian life ever tending onward and upward in virtue, then will he spiritualize himself, and become like unto the angels.

THE COUNTERFEITER.

Working without God, as for example, in the state of mortal sin or even without a good intention, is doing like that forger of bills who for ten years of his life was bent upon amassing a fortune by making counterfeit money. This is a sure and short road to wealth, thought he; for as soon as my paper begins to pass around my income will be immense. So day by day he slaved and long into the night, perfecting his dies and forging money, until beads of perspiration would roll down his face, and his arms, from constant and feverish haste, would fall limp to his side. At last he was through. Heaps of crisp bills lay stacked round about him ready for circulation. But just as the money-maker was ready to pass them on, the stamp of the realm was changed; the outstanding currency was called in and prohibited thenceforth to serve as a medium for exchange. So it happened that overnight all his hopes were crushed and all his labor was rendered vain.

The greatest dupes the devil has are those men who, as the saying goes, work themselves to death. Who exhaust an anxious existence in studies and plans and hard work to enrich themselves; who sacrifice every duty, social and religious, only to find out at last that they have missed the very end for which they were placed in this world.

And there was a rich man, we read in St. Luke, Ch. xii, who said: "What shall I do? Because I have not where to lay up together my fruits? And he said: This will I do: I will pull down my barns and will build greater; and into them will I gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul from thee: and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

This is the paradox of modern life; not that men stand around all day idle but that they work like galley-slaves, for nothing. In the same anomalous condition is found many a father whose one concern in life is the education and placing of his children in the world and many a mother whose horizon is bounded by the monotony of her home and whose only pleasure is to drudge and slave for those near and dear to her; the one and the other, who because they have no religion or are unfaithful to it, go through life without doing anything. Because they know not God or ignore Him, they do not work for Him, and therefore are working without avail. Of these, Edward Healy Thompson in his Life of St. Charles Borromeo remarks; they may be doing well according to the standard of the world, but nevertheless, that benevolence which allows a man in serving others, to be careless of losing God or even one degree of His grace is not benevolence or charity at all; it is a mere natural feeling such as

works in the bosom of every man not a brute, whether he be a Jew or pagan, and is compatible with the absence of all personal holiness and the total disregard of the greatest of all commandments.

It were an infinite tragedy if at the end of life all our toil and labor were stamped as counterfeit and the words were applied to us which the Divine Seer of the Apocalypse addressed to the angel of the church of Laodicea: "Thou sayest, I am rich and made wealthy and I have need of nothing and thou knowest not that thou are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

Our good works in themselves are only of passing value and merit only a temporal reward. It is our union with Christ as members of that mystical body of which He is the Head which gives them a supernatural value and an infinite reward. By keeping ourselves in the state of grace and by often renewing our good intention we are laying by treasures for eternity.

THE ALARM CLOCK.

About two miles from St. Bede Abbey in the city of Peru, Ill., is a factory, one of the largest of its kind, where Alarm Clocks by the thousands are made daily. These clocks are of all sizes with cases simple and ornate and with waking-devices attached, as various as they are ingenious. Some tinkle with a sweetness like that of silver bells as if an angel were arousing some feverish patient from his fitful sleep; others with an impetuous ring that would startle from the coma of death the sulkiest sleeper, in fits and starts angry and shouting, rasp out their command that the hour for rising has struck.

What a faithful monitor is this little animated box! The beating pulse, the heart athrob within its trim and vibrant body—it seems so like a living thing; and like a living thing it stands as bedside sentinel. Charge this watchman of the night with your message, then compose yourself to sleep. His clicking monotone will not hurt the ear of night. Sleep on, till suddenly he clears his throat; then mark!—the hour fixed upon has come; he is bracing for his clarion call. At the first whirr, quickly arise and gently quiet him; or remain and in anger snatch him up and hurl him from you for his impertinence in screaming out his message a second and a third time;—he invites or resents nothing. The

smile of his open face remains bland and true as ever. The early morning vender will always find him on the alert; the drowsy laborer may depend upon his call; the nurse in keeping her nightly vigils by the sick, the tired mother couched with her ailing fretting child, may time her round of duty by this monitor and mark its intervals.

All this the little clock will do but nothing more. If its triple summons remains unheeded it will not call again but with calm and steady pace will proceed on its journey round the dial.

We find in the Alarm Clock a picture of Actual Grace. The ingenuity of all men combined cannot even suggest the wonderful ways by which grace speaks to and acts upon man. Grace may touch him gently as the summer breeze and softly as a springtime shower, or it may come upon him with the rush of a storm-cloud and the force of a thunder clap: in plenty and famine, in harvests and droughts, in births, in sickness, in death. A book may be its instrument, the word of a friend, the message of a preacher, convey it. The whispering of the Guardian Angel, the voice of conscience, show it in action. Grace acts by advising, by dissuading, by warning, by urging; by working upon the fears and hopes of man in appealing to the great realities, death, judgment, heaven, hell, which he must face.

Grace does all this but it does nothing more. It persuades but does not force, it incites but does not compel. If we heed its summons it is well; if not, it

may never call again. Every abuse of grace is a dangerous thing and akin to sin. The barrenness of our spiritual life is due not to a scarcity or lack of grace, but to the fact that we harden our hearts against it.

Under the impulse of grace we oftentimes generously resolve, but in the execution of the resolution we lag behind. Hence, there is such a woeful difference in character between first and second thought. Upon first thought we are charitable, pious, and generous; upon second, hard and niggardly towards God and our neighbor. We meet a beggar and upon first thought we are moved to help him; but upon second thought we put it off, either for the specious reason that we must first investigate or because we choose to believe he may not be worthy. We are urged by grace to make up with an enemy. The opportunity is at hand and upon first thought we agree to do so, but second thought tells us we better wait for a more suitable occasion. And so it happens that between our first and second thought, a thousand graces die. God save us from these "Second Thoughts." It is due to them more than to anything else that hell is paved with good resolutions. It is because we fail to act when the flush of grace is upon us that there is such a disparity between the promise of life and its fruit.

Amiel, the gifted Genevan scholar and aesthete, who spent nearly the whole of his life in beautiful dreams and fair resolves, was visited on his deathbed by his sister. This loving sister, to comfort and cheer her

dying brother, read over for him the letters he had written her in early manhood forty years before. How full of promise these letters were of the great things he meant to accomplish for himself and for others! He would do so much for the betterment of mankind; he would alleviate the common misery, physical and moral, of the world; he would be a savior of men. And now, forty years after these letters were written what had he accomplished? Little or nothing. Oh, if only his sister had known—he confessed it himself—she would have left unread those promises of the past. The very recollection that his life was a failure was agony to him, keener than the anguish of death. He died in 1881.

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

The following incident has happened so long ago that I can but dimly recall the time and place. As to the time it does not matter. The place was somewhere in southern Kansas. A case, in the defense of which many lawyers were engaged, was up for trial in one of the courts. The senior lawyer of the circuit, a stern but courteous gentleman had little patience with the jokes and tricks of the younger members of the bar always going on during court recess. Though exceedingly near-sighted he had the habit of laying his glasses on the table during his speeches to the jury. One day, as his back was turned to the other lawyers, one of them picked up his spectacles and with a bit of mucilage fastened to the lenses pieces of tissue paper which so exactly covered them as not to be noticeable and yet so effectually as to prevent vision through them. Soon the owner of the glasses came back to the table to examine some papers in reference to his brief. He put on the glasses, looked at the paper, adjusted them again—and then a pallor overspread his face that was pitiful to see.

"My God, gentleman, I am blind! I have feared it for years," he exclaimed. He sank into his chair and buried his face in his hands.

For an instant the court-room was hushed. Even the practical joker must have felt remorse at the evident suffering of his victim. Before any one could speak or the sheriff rap for order, the old attorney lifted his head, took off the glasses and of course, had his sight back again. Instantly his face flushed as he rubbed the tissue paper from the lenses; he stood up, an angry and excited man.

"If I knew who did that dastardly trick, if I knew who caused me that minute of agony" he broke out, "I swear I would kill him on the spot." He left the court-room and the judge adjourned the session for the day. This is the story. Now, for the moral.

Through our own fault and through the fault of others we all more or less indulge in this trickery of placing tissue paper before one another's eyes. The maxims of the world by which we so readily allow ourselves to be governed, the specious reasons which our own corrupt nature evolves and alleges in order to evade some duty or sacrifice; flattery also and selfishness, are devices that dim the spiritual eye and which, unless removed and kept away, will affect it as would astigmatism and blindness, the eye of the body; they will produce moral darkness, that is, they will lead to the loss of virtue and not seldom, to the loss of faith.

Let the ordinary person place the record of his life beside that of fervent Catholics, his vague belief and uncertain morals beside their stern faith and strict virtue, and the result of the comparison if it is honest and deep, will remove many a layer of tissue paper from his eyes.

They only are truly wise who by continual examination and introspection keep their spiritual sight clear and true and help it out with one or other of those optical aids in which the Holy Scripture and the Lives of the Saints abound. Such is the Scripture text with which St. Ignatius set aright the eager Francis Xavier: "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Such help was the oft repeated query: "Of what use is this to me for eternity?" which sanctified St. Aloysius of Gonzaga; such was St. Philip of Neri's "What then? . . . "What then?" . . . which he addressed to an ambitious Roman student. Many a Christian has gauged his sight and found a helpful lens by placing in proper perspective a pair of cross-bones and a skull. The color of green fields and of verdant lawns is restful and salutary to the eye; but more salutary to his spiritual vision was it when St. Francis Borgia gazed steadfastly upon a heap of mouldering clay in the burial vault of Granada, —the decomposing body of the beautiful Isabella, queen-consort of Charles V. "Never, never more," he then and there exclaimed, "will I serve a master who can die." There are a thousand texts in Scripture any of which will serve as a spiritual eye-wash and optical tonic. Or do you need light to assist the eye? There is none of so powerful a ray as the light of the Blessed Candle which will glare at your dying pillow. Use it betimes, use it often; with its aid nothing written upon the tablet of your soul or in the annals of history will be undecipherable to you. Its light will illumine your

mind and help you to appraise at their value the joys and sorrows of life and to judge rightly which things are conducive to God's glory and your eternal welfare and which not.

The great majority of mankind do not and will not see one fraction of what they ought to see. Their eyes, through their own fault, lack clarity of vision. The proverb that none are so blind as those who will not see, applies in some degree even to the best of us. How keenly and terribly clear we will see when we come to stand in the white light of the Judgment Seat, where the tissue-paper of deceit and lying and hypocrisy, and the veil of religious sophistry and of unbelief, will be torn away from the soul! How vividly does the Book of Wisdom in Chapter V. describe what I have so languidly attempted! Then will the wicked in juxtaposition to the just, say; "These are they, whom we had sometime in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God and their lot is with the Saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth. . . . We have wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction; but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us; or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us?"

St. Augustine says:

"As the sun sends into the healthy, perfect eye, rays that are mild, but into the sick one, painful darts;

as he invigorates the former and distresses the latter; and as the whole difference for this is found not in the sun but in the condition of the eye; so also, does God appear good to the good and evil to the wicked. It is not your God Who has changed, but yourself." What is this but a paraphrase of the Psalmist: "With the elect thou wilt be elect: and with the perverse thou wilt be perverted." Ps. xvii, 27.

THE LURE OF LIFE.

A mile or so from Dieppe among the beetling rocks which protect the northern coast of France against the Channel Waters, a little Normandy maid about fourteen years of age, was pleasuring as she had often done before, in search of shells and sea-flowers and pretty stones. There was no danger for the tide was out. An hour or two had already been spent in this pastime. Having gathered as much and what she liked of the treasures at her feet, it may have chanced that she espied upon a rock cliff above her, some especially pretty starfish or polyp, to gain which a higher footing was necessary. The slimy stone caused her to slip and fall and in so luckless a way that one foot became wedged in between the cleft of a fissured rock. She tried one way, she tried another to free herself; it was in vain. Nervously she tugged and pulled and strained as with growing anxiety she noticed the rays of the sun slanting more and more from the west, when, oh horror! the first wavelets of the returning tide stole sobbing round her feet. With all the strength of despair she struggled with might and main; alas! to no purpose. Realizing that as far as her efforts went her doom was fixed, for the waters were rising rapidly, she called for help. Oh! how she must have screamed out the names of father and mother and loved ones to

come to her rescue. How frantically she must have called upon God and His Blessed Mother and the saints to save her! No doubt she wept and prayed and tore her hair, till the floods rushing upon her impetuously engulfed and silenced her forever.

Can any torture be imagined more refined than what this young girl endured? Can any death more agonizing be imagined? The next day they found her dead, with her trifling fatal treasures scattered round about her, still pinioned to the rock.

How readily this story lends itself to point a moral in regard to the lures of life and the blandishments of the world! As was the Normandy maid enticed to her ruin by the gaudy shells and silken kelp and pretty flowers of the sea so has many a youth and maiden been entrapped by the tinsel and false pleasures of the world. These lures are the theatre, promiscuous reading, dress, and the dance.

No, no, St. Francis of Sales never approved of the dance, even though he is the gentlest, and as many say, the most lenient of saints. No saint ever approved of the dance. It can never be sufficiently exorcised for that. What the Saint did was to tolerate it; that is, providing it were hedged round with all reasonable precautions, to allow it within the narrowest margin this side of a direct prohibition. No one can say with the Psalmist, "The wicked have laid a snare for me," who from lightmindedness, frivolity or dissipation of spirit, is continually looking for pleasure, even though the pleasure be neutral and innocent.

Mrs. Perrin, an exemplary Christian wife and mother, and sister of Pauline Marie Jaricot, that saintly maiden who founded the Propagation of the Faith and the Living Rosary, came to the church of St. Nizier, Lyons, one morning very early in order to see her confessor. She met instead the Abbe John Wendel Wurtz, a priest of eminent holiness. Approaching him Mrs. Perrin said: "Father, I wish to receive Communion this morning but having been at the theatre last evening I want to be reassured about my so doing." The holy priest replied instantly and almost sternly: "Madam, in that case it is not simply a reassurance that you need; it is confession you want." To confession she accordingly went and when she was through the Abbe added these significative words: "A Christian woman should never go to the theatre merely from pleasure; it is only to please her husband and in his company that she may appear there. And Madam," he continued, "I lay it down as a rule, that no Christian ought ever of his own accord to visit a place where he would not wish to die."

But after all, no play or book, or proffered indulgence, can fairly be called a lure or a trap, against which we have been warned and the worthlessness of which and its consequences are as plain as day; if traps they are, it is only the froward and the foolhardy who will stumble into them. The saintly Abbe of St. Nizier was not a rigorist unless every honest playwright, such as was the late Daniel Frohman, is so likewise. In his "Memoirs of a Manager," Mr. Frohman, to show the trend of the times, asserts that as recently as 1888

he dared not for example stage the Pinero dramas before a New York audience without radical emendation, but that only three years later the same plays unexpurgated were received without a word of criticism by the same public and that at the time his Memoirs were in composition, travesties of morality of the Pinero type were considered as not too daring for the stage of even a boarding school.

Thus it happens that the old Virgilian story of the Laöcoon is forever being verified. The priest of Neptune for disobeying Minerva is destroyed along with his sons by two sea-serpents. The group of statuary representing the incident sculptured from a solid block of marble, is treasured in the Vatican. It is the disobeying God, it is the slighting of the voice of conscience, it is the tampering with our baptismal vows, which leads us into spiritual traps; which invites the ancient serpent from his abysmal deep and gives him entrance into our hearts and homes, to accomplish our destruction.

THE NORMANDY MAID.

A Tragedy from Real Life.

I.

Half a league from Dieppe, lo, behold!
Phyllis comes her lonely haunt approaching;
Where the verging rocks the sea withhold,
Hartfleur north to Tresport, from encroaching.
There behold
Phyllis, on the verging rocks, so bold.

II.

Born and cradled on the Norman Coast,
Early drew her sea-ward Neptune's luring;
Gift shells scatt'ring,—he the am'rous host;—
Silken kelp and sparkling stones alluring.
All this boast,
Came to Phyllis from her aqueous host.

III.

Rapt in wonderment one fatal day,
At the wealth left by the tide outflowing;
Sped she garn'ring the beetling way,
Time nor distance heeding of her going.
On this day,
Sped she garn'ring the beetling way.

IV.

Sated, but that she a polyp spies,
Which to reach a mossy stone gives finding.
Up the slimy, cloven rock she hies.—
She slips and falls! her foot the fissure binding.
A polyp spies;
Up the rock unfortunately hies.

V.

Prone she tugged, then rose in anxious pain;
Worked and strained as urged her heart a-throbbing.
Marks the rays a-slant of daylight's wane:
Hears a wavelet by her feet low-sobbing.
In anxious pain,
Marks the dying rays of daylight's reign.

VI.

A second wave!—she sees and knows and groans:
Siren music stops and all wave-dal'ying.
Sobbing wavelets yield to flood-tide moans;

High to knee, the channel-waters rall'ying.
Knows and groans;
Sobbing wavelets yield to flood-tide moans.

VII.

"God! my God!" she calls. "Kindred dear!
Father, mother!" anguished, screams them crying.
Mumbles, prays, with fright-distorted leer;
Saint-like too: "So young, too young for dying!"
Calls her "Dear;"
Saint-like prays and screams her dying fear.

VIII.

Bested in the floods unholy race;
Mad, her sea-gifts scatt'ring, her hair tearing;
Yields in death she to the Ghoul's embrace;
Soulless waters drown the maid despairing.
In the race,
Yields in death she to the Ghoul's embrace.

IX.

Garish gifts encircle her to mock;—
Rouen this to Dieppe hears repeating;—
Phyllis dead, they found her by the rock;
Neptune, when to darksome caves receding.
Her they mock,
Sea-gifts circling Phyllis and the rock.

X.

Youth or maiden be not nymph or thrall,
Smiles or lures a man or sprite, God-aping;
Gifts of earth adjudge as shells withal,
You who hold of life, its marring, making.
Be not thrall,
To earth-gifts judged as shells withal.

ST. MARGARETS SCHOOL

SUNKEN CITIES.

The tradition of towns, of cities and islands, swallowed up by the sea, is common among the peoples of northern France, in low Germany on both sides of the peninsula of the Netherlands, and along the shores of the Baltic. Opposite the present village of Busen on the Baltic there was an island of the same name, which has disappeared centuries ago. Vineta the great emporium of the North in medieval times was swallowed up by the sea in 1183. Between the Pomeranian Coast and the Isle of Rugen, its ruins litter the ocean-bed and many a roof and pinnacle and spire of this lost city are visible at low tide to this day. This tradition as a whole, of submerged cities, rests partly upon fact and partly upon fiction.

It was from its legendary side that Renan the unhappy, blasphemous renegade, in his "Recollections of Infancy and Youth," borrowed the story of the town of Is which, on account of its crimes, was said to have been swallowed up by the sea; and the sound of whose church-bells coming up from the abysmal deep may be heard, any day the sea is calm, clamorously calling its recreant people to repentance. But more appalling than the fate of Is or any catastrophe in fact or fiction, is the story of the unfortunate apostate himself who, at the close of his life commenting upon the

traditions of his Catholic home and his early religious training, could write without a tremor of remorse: "It often seems to me that I have at the bottom of my heart a town of Is whose bells ever and anon are urging to prayer one who no longer believes."

There are cities that have been rebuilt after having been devastated by fire; some, after having been ruined by floods; and others, after they have been rocked to destruction by earthquakes; and there were cities that have been so overwhelmed with disaster that not a trace of them can be found.

The moral is plain. The stories about the disappearance of cities finds its counterpart in the history of lost souls. God is infinitely good and merciful and therefore there is no man so wicked who, providing he is repentant, may not be pardoned. There is no sin which on God's part is irremissible. Examples without number of wonderful conversions prove that Christ has indeed come to seek out and to save sinners.

But when a man filled with satanic pride, like Renan in his notorious "Life of Jesus," denies His Divinity and thereby separates himself from Christ through Whom alone salvation is possible, or if, as when a man commits one of the six sins against the Holy Ghost, he rejects the grace of God and deliberately excludes from his soul all those dispositions by which forgiveness is wrought, then has he reached the stage of final impenitence, then is his soul lost. And in that case, what has the miserable man gained even in this world for what he has lost? Nothing.

The historian Jansen observes, that a striking vindication of Christianity might be drawn from the biographies and confessions of celebrated worldlings and modern heathens whose names rank high in the world of science, literature and art. Refusing to accept the Church of Christ with its promise of peace and happiness for this world and the next, they are forced to confess that they have found life a bitter disappointment full of unhappiness and despair.

Did not the god of modern Olympus, the idolized Goethe confess: "I have been envied as a favorite of the gods; nevertheless during my seventy-five years of life I have hardly enjoyed four weeks of real contentment. Like Sisyphus my continual task has been the rolling of a huge stone to the mountain top. What does life amount to after all? Men spend their days in absurd antics and frivolities. All men are methodically absurd and odd beyond endurance. When one has reached my age he has learned thoroughly to despise man."

"Outside the Church there is no salvation, and therefore neither any real joyousness of life or contentment of soul. Among the victims of unbelief it is the most intellectually gifted who complain most bitterly of the miseries of life. They seek to interest themselves in the study of the arts, of the sciences; but as their labor is without a purpose it is therefore without satisfaction. With advancing age they grow tired of life and cheerless of hope and solace, die in despair." —de Maistre.

Its vigil o'er, the unquenched light
Gleams ghastly in the dawning grey;
So lights the skeptic's sallow day
A lone cere candle of the night.

But cerge — or ill-fed lantern-light
Will usher in a new-born day;
The while foul-sputtering down its way,
His taper ends in darker night.

TOO LATE!

The old Catholic "God be with you!" has for most men lost its Christian character in the meaningless contraction "Good-bye." But this remains its property that the heart wells up with emotion when the word is given and received between friends. "Farewell," "Good-bye," are so often prophetic or reminiscent of final separations and of death. It was the last time I saw him,—it was the last letter he wrote me—how these phrases move to pity and anguish! And yet, if we only knew it, our whole life is but a chain of these farewells. Every month in the year we are doing things we will never do again: we have read a book and put it by for the future but we will never open it again; we have been to a place and without our knowing it we will never visit it more; we have met an acquaintance or a friend, and premonition was silent that it was for the last time. And so it will come to pass that our last adieus are spoken and the probation of life is at end, and we will not have surmised it till we awaken to the great realities of the future, in another world. These reflections recall to my mind what the brilliant Madam de Staël somewhere has remarked upon the words, "No more!" that both in sound and sense they are more descriptive of melancholy than any other in our language. If that be granted, then for the same

reason is the phrase, "All alone!" the most pathetic, and emphatically so the words, "Too late!" the most expressive of anguish and despair.

Who has never missed a train? To miss a train may be a disappointment and be attended with more or less inconvenience but surely it is never such a mishap as to deserve to be put on record. Still there are exceptions. I have read of such an exception in the Rev. Alban Stolz's book, "Travels through Spain."

An old man from a country district upon receiving a telegram from the hospital was hastening over a slushy road through rain and storm, to catch the Midnight Express which would carry him by morning to the bedside of his dying daughter. The way to the station was long, the time was short, and with all the speed he could make he had come within hailing distance only, when to his dismay he saw the train pull up, stop a moment, and hurry off. He waved his hands frantically, he called, he shouted, that they take him on. It was too late. Upon the dripping boards of that lonely wayside station he stood in the glare of the lightning flashes, silhouetted against the curtain of night, the picture of despair; and once, and then a second time, from the speeding, rumbling train, the chilling words came back, "Too late! Too late!"

What words are so fraught with woe even in the ordinary affairs of our earthly life as is this phrase Too late! What terrible and stupendous consequences are bound up with it in connection with the life to come!

One day, one hour, one moment, yes,
'Twixt weal and woe and death and life,
Heaven's peace and hell's eternal strife;—
So narrow the dividing way.
How reads this tale?
A moment fail—
Then sob in vain on Judgment Day:
"Too late!"

George Eliot in "Silas Marner," draws attention to a strange kind of logic to which all men resort in determining a probability. She says:

"The lapse of time during which an event has not happened is oftentimes alleged as a reason why the event should never happen even when the lapse is precisely the added condition which makes the event imminent. A man will tell you that he has worked in a mine forty years unhurt by accident, and allege this as a reason why he should apprehend no danger, though the roof is beginning to sink; and it is often observable that the older a man gets the more difficult it is to him to retain a believing conception of his own death."

So it is with many a hoary sinner who, because until old age he has escaped the vengeance of God, enjoys a questionable peace upon the fancied security that whatever may happen and has happened to others will not happen to him; that some extraordinary mercy will save him from an impenitent death and from hell.

These thoughts but faintly suggest and lead up to that climax of exhortative teaching, the parable of the Ten Virgins of whom five were foolish and five wise.

With what finality and ponderous weight the words strike home; "Amen, I say to you I know you not!"

TOO LATE!

I.

"O haste, dear father! to my side."
This message by the air-line sped,
Aroused him in his old homestead.
His daughter's cry to efforts plied
The father old.

II.

The night was dark and wild the storm,
How long he found the tortuous way,
Till last the welcome beck'ning ray
Revealed the humble station's form!
From thence he'll speed
His child to meet.
Come not fond heart—by anguish torn—
Too late!

III.

The midnight struck its doleful twelve;
The train is come; . . . it onward moves;
Startled, dazed, he loudly sues
A minute's grace, not for himself
But for his child.
His ravings wild,
The storm returns with mocking yells,
"Too late!"

IV.

How visioned on that dripping board,
In one fierce lightning stroke to me,
The victim in his agony,
A-kneeling looms. . . . His frenzied word:
"Oh, stop for me,
My child to see!"
And that refrain in dread accord:
"Too late!"

ST. MARGARETS SCHOOL

V.

More fiendlike than the lightning flash
Whose angry glare but lights to kill;
Or when to plaud its brutal will,
Loud comes the ominous thunder crash:
Find aught below,
So fraught with woe,
Like malisons in these words clash,—
"Too late!"

VI.

One day, one hour, one moment, yea,
'Twixt weal and woe and death and life;
Heav'n's peace and Hell's abysmal strife;—
So narrow the dividing way.
How reads this tale?
A moment fail—
Then sob perhaps till Judgment Day,
"Too late!"

HOME, SWEET HOME!

"An immortal lyric wedded to immortal music," said the artistic world, which never praises or blames but in superlatives, of the Heine-Schubert poem, "Der Doppelgänger," The Phantom Double.

At the hour of twelve on a moonlight night a way-worn, heartsick exile returns after many years to his natal place to call on his betrothed. The well-known house and its location is as fresh in his mind as ever. Eagerly he hurries down the wide street into a narrower one, shortening the distance by an available turn here and a crossway there, till at last, flurried and excited, he stands before the goal of his desire.

With feverish expectancy he looks up to the window which will be lighted up in welcome of his return. But there is no light at the casement and no answering smile to greet him at the door. Blank and dead the uncurtained panes stare down at him. The house is untenanted. He is grievously disappointed; he is stunned. Griefstricken he wrings his hands in sorrow and bewails his fate. Just then the village clock strikes the solemn midnight toll. Hoping against hope, he again looks up at the window for one sign of recognition that might ease his aching heart; it is in vain. The same ghostly stare is fixed upon him and chills him to the heart. Yet there in the moonlight on the

pavement, his phantom double, his shadow, is flitting hither and thither, dancing up and down, in witness and mockery of his grief. Cursing his jeering, tantalizing, heartless double, he rushes with an anguished farewell from that spot of his erstwhile happiness, to hide himself somewhere, anywhere, in his despair.

There is not a poem amongst the classics, not a masterpiece in painting, sculpture and music, from which this note of longing regret and anguish is absent. A work of art is a classic when, over and above its technical finish, the theme is in accord with some undefinable, intangible lost happiness, which the heart of man bewails and seeks to regain. Our Christian philosophers have drawn attention to the fact that the great catastrophe which, as related in Genesis, overtook the human race in Paradise, is a fact the truth of which finds daily confirmation in the thoughts and aspirations of men. Mankind, even unwittingly, confesses that it has lost its pristine happiness somewhere, somehow, and it is continually striving to win it back. There is nothing wrong in this regret and striving; it is natural to man, for man was created for happiness.

Unfortunately, men seek for the garden of pleasure where it cannot be found and for a kind of pleasure which is so only in appearance. Because they know not where or how to look for happiness, philosophers, poets and dreamers, say it is unattainable here below, and therefore, to give vent to the irrepressible longings of their heart they set up for themselves an abstraction, which they personify as Beatrice, Laura, Rosalind,

Sacharissa or Elaine, to whom they pay tribute in chivalrous deeds, in poetry and song.

But although God has cursed, devastated and laid bare the original Paradise, He has established another more beautiful and delightful, which all men who will can find and enter—the Holy Catholic Church.

Within the pale of this new wonderful garden, the Holy Cross replaces the Tree of Life; and the Seven Sacraments, the ancient river with its four branches. Within this sacred close, hope tempers sorrow and suffering, and a glorious faith banishes anguish and despair. Our Holy Church is therefore a garden of happiness, a house of joy. The royal prophet gives the reason: "Ye that stand in the house of the Lord and in the courts of the house of our God; Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good." The life of every member of the Church is a life of hope and promise, and therefore a life of happiness.

Indeed, peace and happiness are marks that are looked for in the life of every servant of God for whom the honor of the altar is sought. Sadness and melancholy are akin to sin for they lead to it and are so commonly the fruit and sign of it. The melancholy, the choleric, may in word and act emulate the saints of God and resemble them in zeal and austerity, but their sanctity is of the mooted kind like that of Savanarola. The moods of the soul affect its moral nature. We would almost venture to say that Pascal and the Port Royalists as well as de Lamennais two centuries later, were predisposed to schism and heresy by their con-

stitutional temperament; for choler and melancholy are the serum in which the bacilli of pride and disobedience best thrive. Peace and joy might be called the fifth mark of the Church. That Holy Church is the home of peace and happiness is proved from internal and external evidences. From among these external evidences we single out for the present, first, the mural decorations of the catacombs; and secondly, draw attention to the character of her ancient music, called the Gregorian Chant.

We know from the ancient martyrologies that the first Christians went to prison and death joyfully. They chose their lot voluntarily. More eagerly than the marriageable virgin for the myrtle wreath, they longed and prayed for the martyr's crown. From their own mouths we have the confession that there is no joy on earth so deep and ecstatic as that to die for Christ. We know this and we know why; it was because God sustained his faithful servants with extraordinary grace. We marvel at the joy that overflowed their hearts in the hour of trial; but we marvel equally to find, that peace and happiness never forsook them during the weeks and months and years of suspense which they passed in the somber catacombs. Were not the First Christians engaged in terrific daily combat with the powers of wickedness? Was there ever a day when either some hero or heroine was not hailed before the tribunal and sentenced to torture and death, or the remains of one who had gloriously fallen in combat, was not brought in for interment?

Their joy then, if it existed, must have been hidden; if not, in what way could they have given evidence of it? Go down into the catacombs, look around and see. The palm branch and the vial of blood are eloquent beyond words and like the monograms of Christ and the symbolical images, bread, fish, the lamb, the dove, are easily understood. But what may the hidden meaning be of those other drawings and designs: the vaults and crypts decorated with trailing vines and flowers and garlands; the arched roofs and walls and corridors gladdened with birds of various colors, and fishes, and animals; those pencilings to show the graceful antics of elves and spirits; and that profusion of artistic tracery of ferns? They are for ornament only and prove the happy childlike disposition of the first children of the Church who in spite of the place and the times found it congenial to give some attention to the graceful and the beautiful. The purpose of all this delicate tracery and handiwork was not symbolical, unless perhaps to show that the joyful and beautiful dominate and not sadness, where their blessed brethren lay asleep in God. There is not a burial ground the world over in which Sorrow stooping under her heavy drapery of weeds, is not a conspicuous figure, always excepting the catacombs. Neither "The Subterranean Christian Rome" of De Rossi nor the "Pagan Rome" of Father Kuhn the Benedictine, shows a single example of a sign or emblem of sorrow connected with early Christian burial. Moreover it is as remarkable as it is touching on the part of the First Christians, those

generous imitators of Christ, the fact namely, that not a mark can be found which would betray bitterness or hatred on their part toward their relentless persecutors; even the instruments of torture through which they merited their crowns, are absent. What we see as reminiscent of those terrible but glorious days, is the martyr represented with uplifted eyes, in ecstatic pose, with the words of St. Stephen on his lips: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. . . . Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Surely this proves that the Church of God is a House of peace and of joy. Fervent converts who have lived for years in the shadows of death; who, in Scriptural words lived in a strange land, are never done with expressing the rapturous happiness they have found within the pale of the Church. "When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion we were like them that come again from sickness. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing."

With singing! Singing and music are the natural issue of peace and happiness. But not all singing nor music of any kind. Our Holy Church knows to distinguish. Her house is a house of joy and the home of peace; the music that is heard within its sacred precincts must therefore express the characteristics of her spirit: faith, hope and joy.

It is a poor way of putting it to say that there is nothing capricious or meaningless in the ceremonies and the ritual of the Church; indeed, not a jot or tittle of

her ritual but finds its impelling motive grounded in and suggested by philosophy and theology. If Holy Church is the home of peace and joy, the proof of it will externalize itself in many ways. The mural decorations of the catacombs prove it one way and—I am not straying from my subject when I say,—Ecclesiastical music proves it in another. What is the philosophic reason upon which the Church grounds herself in so insisting upon the Gregorian Chant? Music can express every mood and every passion; it can run the gamut from Wagner's Tristan and Isolde, seething with carnal sensuousness; to Mendelsohn's Midsummer Night's Dream, throbbing with an exuberant sense of gaiety and life; to the expression of the highest exultation of the martyr.

The Church knows how to attune her music to the moods and passions of man, not of the carnal but the spiritual, not of the pagan but of the regenerated man; of the man who rises superior to and conquers, but not of him who is conquered by destiny. Therefore, in joy as in sorrow, in life as in death, the note of faith, of hope, of Christian fortitude, is ever present in her music; but never the siren voice of carnal pleasure, the languid plaint of hopelessness, the wail of despair.

Ecclesiastical music is built on the diatonic scale which ascending and descending by natural intervals, expresses resolution, decision, alacrity, gladness, and is therefore in accord with the spirit of the Church, who in her ritual urges and inspires devotion to duty in the face of every trial, and heroism in the service of God.

There is no straining after effect in her music, by recourse to diminished and augmented intervals, no artificial help of the half-step or of rhythm; no chromatic rise or fall in the sensuous or affected manner of modern music. Profane music is the expression of inordinate passion, pulsating with the cry of despair or throbbing with frenzied love; the clear tone of hope is absent from it; the assurance "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" the shout of victory. Gregorian music is without rhythmic measure unless it consists, like that of the poetry of the Sacred Scriptures, in parallelisms; that is, in the balancing of musical phrases with each other. What rhythmic swing it has is natural, such as is discernible in poetic prose.

The mellifluent, whining, whimpering moans and sobs of modern music, its paroxysms of hate and fury, may draw the tear and excite the passions, but it cannot apply the healing balm. It enervates, depresses and clogs. The music of the Church is exhilarating, comforting and inspiring. Let modern masters in figured music reproduce the sorrow that knows no solace, of the pagan mother tearing her hair in frenzied grief at the death or her child, or of the agony of the widow upon the funeral pyre resolved to mingle her ashes with those of her husband deceased. The music of the Church has a different and a higher purpose. It too speaks of grief and agony fathomless as the ocean, but of agony which like that of the Mother of God, does not faint and despair, but stands at the Cross. What a contrast for example between the soul-

ful Stabat Mater of Lent and the elaborate masterpiece of Rosini! Rosini's elaboration would pall upon the hearers if repeated half a dozen times; that of Jacaponi de Todi with its simple pathetic setting, never. The great anthems of the Church and her sequences, never tire. The Adeste Fidelis, the Veni Creator, the Lauda Sion, and the Dies Irae, these and all of them, are in words and music inimitable, immortal, and sublime. They strike no false note. They ring true with what is the spirit of Holy Church, the note of faith, of hope, of triumph. They fill the heart with courage, peace and happiness.

"Oh, could I but see Avignon!" sighed a peasant close by Viviers, how happy I would be! He never gazed on Avignon; but even had his wish been granted he would have found to his disappointment a city other than he imagined. Now, that is a picture of the world. Oh, could I but see Avignon, sighed a second peasant, how happy I would be! He never saw the city, for the Avignon he looked for existed only in his imagination; but in searching for it he found another, a thousand times more grand and beautiful than any city he could imagine; it thrilled, it captured, it thoroughly satisfied him. That is a picture of the Church.

Some men search for the one city, some for the other. Those are following a mirage, these a reality. The longings and hopes of the former will be thorougly frustrated, the desires and efforts of the latter, superabundantly realized.

Our Holy Church is the threshold of heaven; it is

the earthly Jerusalem which is a figure and the promise of that Heavenly City St. John saw and described in the Apocalype: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more; for the former things are passed away."

AVIGNON.

I.

A picture by ambition won,
And which I called "My Avignon,"
With hard, persistent labor done,
Crowned my scholastic years.
I drew the Papal palaces,
If out they stood or in recess,
In strict conformity to rule,
As taught within my Master's school.
The castellated towers and wall,
The courts, the Gothic Church and all
Their buttresses and battlements,
The chaptrels and niched bartizans.
The while, each mullion, foil and fret,
Finial, crocket, pendant, head,
I closely traced, the castle grew
Like to a face of one I knew;
And deeper etched into my soul,
The picture throbbed a living whole.
I saw the endless pilgrim throng,
And bishops, princes, priests among,
The very Head of Christendom,
Within the walls of Avignon.

II.

Oh, would my dream of life come true,
To see what see the favored few?
One single day could I but view
The papal city, Avignon!

III.

Full fifty years have come and gone;
At last, I stand in Avignon.
But is, indeed, this Avignon!
Are these the castles I have drawn!
But where's the soul I thought I knew?
Of towers and walls the face is true,
How blows so chill and cold the wind,
When fancy spoke of zephyrs kind!
Alas! with joy expectant come,
I cannot find My Avignon.
The Pope and bishops, priests and all
The Christian flock both great and small—
My ripened sense had told me this:
Such living palace I would miss.
Oh, how is burthened now my mind!
Before me this vast ruin I find.

IV.

Will other Wonder-Castles loom,
By a wise man built or by a loon,
To give imagination scope
For idle dreams and futile hope?
'Tis said, in this I'm not alone;
No man but has his Avignon.

WHAT AND WHO ARE YOU?

Fouqué, the German Romanticist, in a graceful narrative tells the story of Undine, who was a water nymph and therefore born without a soul. It is the only work of the author that has survived.

As an artistic poetic figment of the mind, it has interested and still continues to interest many readers; for surely no one has ever taken the writer of the tale seriously, excepting perhaps some professors in German and American universities, who, whether from an excess of mentality or an excess of intellectual pride, have lost the power to distinguish between what is true and what is fabulous or false.

It is said that genius touches very closely on madness. This is understating the truth, if genius in the concrete is made to include, as is commonly done, any and every learned man. In this wider acceptation of the term, many a man may be found whose genius not only borders on but is sheer madness itself; such is he for example, who takes Undine not for a fanciful but for a real woman. That there are learned madmen who believe that men and women are beings without souls, we know. To them and their dupes no doubt, there is wisdom in and justification for the arrogant assumptions about Man of godless physiologists and scientists, and some excuse for such absurd exhibits in our college

laboratories as that in the Kensington Museum, which the Scottish preacher Dr. Brown in his Horae Subsecivae, describes and justly condemns. "There is on exhibition an Analysis of Man. First, a man contains so much water, and there you have the amount of water in a bottle; so much albumen, and there is the albumen; so much phosphate of lime, fat, haematin, fibrine, salt, etc., etc. Then in the next case, so much carbon; so much phosphorus—a bottle with sticks of phosphorus; so much potassium, calcium, etc. They have not bottles of oxygen, hydrogen, chlorine, etc., but they have cubical pieces of wood on which is written 'the quantity of oxygen in the human body would occupy the space of 170 cubes of this,' etc., etc."

This is science to its limit, indeed! This is teaching the young according to the latest and most advanced method! A method so far in advance of the Christian system that there never has been even to our day a trace of it found in Catholic schools! Christian education will never become so heartless and senseless as to give the children a stone when they cry for bread, or a serpent for a fish.

Such a man in synthesis or analysis, as is on exhibit in the Kensington Museum, never existed. Man consists of body and soul; and he is the caricature of a scientist who in his analysis of man takes no cognizance of the spiritual immortal soul.

Man is made to the image and likeness of God and this image of God is especially found in his soul. It

is because he possesses a soul that man is infinitely above the mere animal and only a little lower than the angels.

St. Augustine in his book on The Trinity, explains the likeness of the soul to God in this way. The will, memory, and understanding, are the three faculties of the soul, distinct and separate, one from another; but the soul is nevertheless not three but one. As the memory begets the understanding and these two beget love, so the Father begot the Son and from them proceedeth the Holy Ghost. Lib. 15 de Trin. 39.

All men agree in this idea of God, that He is supremely wise, supremely good, supremely powerful. Man images God in these attributes, for no matter how impaired through original sin his faculties are and through actual sin may become, he never wholly loses the power to know and love and serve; His knowledge is at least a faint reflection of Divine Wisdom; his capacity to will, to do, and especially to love, represents, though in an infinitesimal way, the infinite power and love of God. The intellect, free will, the immortality of the soul, are traits that constitute man an image of God. Consider moreover, the position that he holds in this world, especially in relation to the lower orders of creatures around him. Man alone is king and lord of them all; he alone, amid brute and inanimate creation, is cognizant of his existence, and endowed with self-esteem; he alone dominates nature and can, if he will, value earthly things in their relation to God and to himself. Therefore it was that the Creator placed man in the

world only when the earth, his kingdom, was ready to receive him its sovereign.

If man then, because he has a soul made to the image of God, is a regal, immortal being, he may nevertheless act and oftentimes does act, as if he had no soul, as if he were nothing more than an animal. Great and admirable is man if you look at his nature and his natural gifts; small and contemptible, if you regard his actual condition and wretched achievements. He has intelligence and understanding: but oh! the ignorance, and errors, and superstitions, and heresies, and other deplorable and pernicious aberrations, to which his mind is subject.

In the words of an old writer, Robert South, "all those arts and sciences and inventions which the vulgar minds gaze at and the ingenious pursue and all admire, are but the relics of an intellect defaced by sin. We admire unregenerate man, his body and soul, only as antiquaries do a piece of old coin, for the stamp it once bore and for the vanishing lineaments that still remain. Man physically and intellectually, must indeed have been glorious in his unfallen state, when even in his decay he is so admirable. He that is comely even when old and decrepit, surely was very beautiful when he was young. An Aristotle was but a poor copy of an Adam, and Athens but the faint ruin of Paradise."

He has free will; but mark his reluctance to do good beside his readiness to do evil; mark the almost incredible sin-abominations of which he makes himself guilty day by day. It is not the will, it is sensuality that gov-

erns him. He is endowed with religiosity and the capacity to pray; but see the never-ending conflict between true faith and his skepticism and unbelief and atheism. The most foolhardy assertions and the flimsiest proofs are eagerly accepted by him and acted upon, that man is but an animal, and that faith and morality depend upon and are governed by climate, inheritance and environment.

The transcendent gift of immortality which so dignifies and makes him like unto God, he discredits and denies; madly he tries to convince himself that man's whole existense is measured by that short span that intervenes between the cradle and the grave. You would imagine that the life-work of many a man is to disprove the immortality of the soul, so that he may bury himself, body and soul forever, in this region of decay and death.

Modern pagans do not differ from their remote ancestors. They agree in this, if you judge them by their word and action, that they are more animal than man. They seem to have been created without souls. Undine, the human being without a soul, was typified in pagan times by the statue of Venus de Medici and by the statue of Apollo Belvidere now in the Vatican. That man is made out of the dust of the earth, is all that experimental science can know, that is all the heathen knew. What the pagan artist wishes to externalize in the head of the Medusa, it were hard to tell. It expresses some ideal neither wholly brutish, nor demonic, nor human; but a blending of all three.

Grecian sculptury does more than ample justice to every part of the physical man; but the brow, the forehead, which is the seat of the intellect, of the soul, it narrows and compresses. Their elders, the Egyptians, went them a step better, and simply topped the human torso with an animal's head, in order to show what they worshiped in man.

That man was taken from the dust of the earth, we can learn in the laboratory and the clinic; but to account for life, the scriptural text must be completed: "And he breathed into him the breath of life and man became a living being." It is where life begins that we cease to comprehend. "This union of body and soul," says St. Augustine, "is a great mystery which neither angel nor man can explain; it is the bond between life and death, between time and eternity; a bond which is easily torn apart but which no man can unite again."

If then in his actual condition, a man who bestializes himself in aspirations, thoughts, belief, and mode of life, likens himself to a being without a soul, so on the contrary, by restraining his animal appetites and developing his spiritual nature, he will become more and more like unto God. The words of the distinguished convert, the Countess Hahn-Hahn, deserve insertion here: "Every disorderly passion, all inordinate love and attachment, will revenge itself just because it is disorderly. Give disordered love or any passion time, and that which is called a consuming love, a mighty passion, will be replaced by its opposite."

Yea, and more. There is nothing, even in a legitimate way, neither person nor thing, to which man can attach himself with enduring love and delight. Therefore was it necessary that a new virtue should arise to secure the union between man and man, friend and friend, husband and wife, namely, duty, truth. "I pledge you my troth," says the Marriage Vow.

Do you wish to know who Man is? Read the first pages of Revelation. Read in Genesis, how wise, how good, how happy he was in his original state of innocence; then was he the untarnished image in which the attributes of God were luminously reflected. He must have been great and beautiful, for it is to his pristine holiness St. Paul refers when he says. "Put on the new man, Who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth." Think of what man was in the beginning, by contemplating the Person of Christ, Who when He came into this world, assumed human nature. And because Christ the Savior, in assuming human nature, came not only to redeem man, but also to be his exemplar, therefore, man, with the help of His grace, can again become what he was in his origin.

Gaze for a moment upon that vast host of regenerated souls who with the help of divine grace and by cooperation have restored the image of God within their souls to its original beauty. In the saints you will see the dignity of man shown forth in all its grandeur: sublime fortitude with profound humility, heavenly contemplation along with heroic charity, spotless holiness with deep commiseration for sinners and the unfortunate.

It is in the manner of Macaulay to generalize without reflection, when upon having read "The Betrothed," he is said to have remarked, that if he could believe the Catholic Church had many representatives within her pale like the great and kindly Cardinal Frederigo Borromeo described by Manzoni, he would be inclined to consider her claims.

Men, like Cardinal Frederigo! The Catholic Church has always had them. In his very day, if the historian had only looked about him, he would have found many among the faithful worthy to be classed with the saintly archbishop of Milan. In the United States alone, if we fix upon the years 1850 and 1855 when Macaulay was in his prime, the Ven. J. N. Neumann was rendering illustrious by his virtues the episcopal chair of Philadelphia; the Rt. Rev. Archabbot Boniface Wimmer was laying the foundations of a monastic establishment in Western Pennsylvania which was to become the mother and nursery of many priories and abbeys and the seat of an apostolate that today embraces the whole of this Union within its scope.

Emulating his example and almost simultaneously, the Very Rev. Edward Sorin at Notre Dame, Indiana, was planting the seed from which sprang and developed the great University of Notre Dame and its affiliated colleges. Father De Smet was laboring amongst the Indians, the Ven. Fr. H. Seelos in parishes and the confessional.—It would be impossible with the limits of an article or of a book, even to enumerate the galaxy of names of illustrious men and women who lived and

died saints in America, during the ten or twenty years before and after 1850: The saintly bishops Flaget, Fenwick, Baraga; the Rev. Prince Demetrius A. Gallitzin; The Ven. Very Rev. Felix de Andreis, C. M.; the Rev. Charles Nerinx founder of the Sisters of Loretto; The Ven. Mother Theodore Guerin foundress of the Mother House of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana; the founders and foundresses of the long list of Houses, Hospitals and Schools, of the Franciscan Sisters, of the Nuns of the Good Shepherd, of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, of the Sisters of Mercy, etc.

And what of Europe? Was not the Curé d'Ars living in 1850? His wonderful life was not unknown in England; the whole world was charmed and edified by his virtue. The Ven Don Bosco the greatest schoolmaster of the nineteenth century, the founder of the wonderful Salesian schools, was famous in Turin, in all Italy, in France; he was called the St. Vincent de Paul of the age; did Macaulay never hear of him? Or of those heroines of Christian Charity, Bl. Madeleine Sophie Barat and Bl. Julia Biliart? What have Clara Barton and Florence Nightingale done for the good of humanity that will compare even remotely with what these incomparable women have accomplished? But why go on?

How flippant or insincere a writer must be, who living in the very presence and vicinity of great servants of God, ventures to imply there are no saintly Frederigos among his contemporaries, simply because he chooses not to see them.

What is man and who? is a question that cannot be answered unless at one and the same time you keep in mind what he was at his creation, and what he was and is separated from God; what he is in the state of regeneration, and what through the merits of Christ he may become.

"Raise your eyes, ye men! to heaven, ye are very gods. He Who thrones above, His equals you are!" "Fix your eyes to the earth, ye misearble men! behold the brutes of the field they are your brethren!" So cry the philosophers and false teachers at all times. It is either "Ye are gods!" or "Ye are brutes!" What a fearful contrast of alternatives, and the one and the other, how fearfully false?

The radical error with nearly all self-elected teachers is this, that their moral system tends either to deify or to animalize man.

Yes, indeed, the Church says, you shall become like unto God, if you live according to His laws and in His holy grace. And animal-like you shall become if your life is governed by your sensual appetites. Man will live forever. Great is man if he live so as to merit a happy immortality; poor and wretched and detestable, if an unhappy eternity is his lot.

PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD.

Part One.

Here is a picture in its harder phases of that bitter farewell which must be spoken at death. The scene is laid in a slave market at Constantinople and is vouched for by the old periodical "The Spirit of the Times," in one of its issues of the year 1850. The paper has suspended long ago.

Two young female slaves, both with pleasing countenances, stood together closely embraced, the arm of the one around the neck of the other; their attitude as well as the strong likeness between them, pointing them out at once as sisters. By their side was an African slave-dealer, in whose ferocious countenance it seemed impossible to discern a trace of human feeling. He was armed with a large stick with which he drove them to and fro literally like animals.

Three or four Turks were discussing with tolerable animation the price of one of these unfortunate sisters. The bargain had been struck and one of the party, a stout rough man was paying down the money. When this was completed, with an imperious movement of the hand, he motioned to his newly purchased slave to follow him. It was the younger and the more timid of the two sisters he had selected.

What followed was painful beyond words to describe. Nothing could have been more painful than to watch the intense, the terrified anxiety, with which both sisters had followed the progress of the sale. Now it was over and they were to be separated forever and consigned to masters and homes, God only knew how dreadful. Aware that the moment of separation had arrived, she, the younger one, whose fate had been sealed, disengaged herself, and turning round, placed her two hands on her sister's shoulders with a firm grasp and gazed into her eyes. She could not speak; she could not weep; but in mute agony and unutterable despair this orphaned girl stood dazed in this last long, heart-rending gaze. It were hard to tell in which face of the two sisters in this last tragic farewell, misery was deepest. The Turk was impatient, he clapped his hands. It was a well known signal that all was over. A tremor shook the frame of the younger girl, her arms fell powerless to her side as she turned to follow her owner. The agonized farewell was over, and in the crowd you could see the poor girl threading her way with an unknown master to her doom. Her sister hid herself behind the other slaves, and falling to the ground, her head sank upon her folded arms in a paroxysm of grief.

Separations between a mother and her child, between brother and sister, between friend and friend, are painful, but not in like degree. Circumstances may attend the farewell that will sweeten the pain or aggravate it. However, there is no separation so bitter as that of

death; there is such an air of appalling finality about it, subjectively and objectively considered; appalling, also, because of its individuality. When the mysterious tie which binds body and soul together is severed, the soul belongs thereafter only to the unseen world. The petty affairs of time are done for and will never again be taken up. No man has ever come back to this earth from the dead. Moreover, it is a scene strictly personal and exclusive. No one can take part in the dying-act of another. If I quote the words of fallible philosophers here or elsewhere, rather than the infallible texts of Scripture, it is simply because the powerful and authoritative sayings of Christ, of the Apostles, and of the ancient prophets, that have any bearing on the four last things, are so familiar to Catholics, that they need no prompting in recalling and applying them. Then too it is instructive, occasionally to look into the unenlightened mind of those outside of the Church, to see what impression the great mysteries of life and death make upon them.

"Single, each man is born into the world," says H. Mann; "single he dies, single he receives the reward of his good deeds, and single, the punishment of his sins. Let man, therefore, sow and garner virtuous deeds, that he may have as inseparable companion, virtue, in that gloom which all must pass through and which is so hard to traverse." Amiel, the Genevan philosopher, expresses himself similarly: "We live alone, we must suffer alone, we must die alone, and we must enter our last resting-place alone. There is no one to share that soli-

tude with us," unless we take time by the forelock, and have by good works and grace made Christ our Friend and Companion.

Then again, as in the slave-sale related above, there is the pain of suspense which precedes the final act. It is a suspense like that of men facing each other in battle array; when the bravest change color and the limbs of the most resolute tremble; when time appears to move on leaden wings, and every minute seems an hour, every hour a day. It is an eyewitness of the Storming of St. Sebastians, who speaks in this strain. "No situation of higher excitement," he adds, "can be imagined or any darker or deeper agitation." Probably not and for the good reason that the soldier in battle-line approaches the condition of the sick man awaiting death.

Consider again the scene at the slave market at Constantinople.

Akin to that deeper and darker grief of the elder sister sympathizing with the agonized fear of the younger at the unspeakable moral fate the future held in store, is the gruelling and distressing scene to himself and to his friends, of a Christian dying in sin. In such a case it is not the separation that pains but the thought of what the unrepentant man's future will be. A good death is but a transitory parting; a bad death is a parting between friend and friend forever.

Further than this the parallel will not extend between the slave-scene mentioned above and the parting-scene at death.

The parallel will not extend to the deathbed of the virtuous. At such beds the pain of separation is sweet, because, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

The proverb says that death is the echo of life; therefore, if our life is good our death will be so. But what is a good life? How is life judged or appraised? By its works. Our Savior said a tree is known by its fruit. Let us take an example.

There is not a duty more often enjoined upon us, no obligation more onerous, than prayer. Does not our Lord admonish us in St. Luke, "that we ought always to pray and not to faint?" In drawing up a comparison between the time allotted to prayer and that given over to sleep in the life of an ordinary Christian, the following apportionment for the one side and the other is liberal:

SLEEP.		PRAYER.	
A day	8 hours.	Morning Prayer	¼ hour.
For a week	56 hours.	Night Prayer	¼ hour.
For a month	240 hours or 10 days.	For the week	3½ hours.
For a year	120 days.	For the month	14 hours.
For 30 years	120 days.	The four Sunday Masses a month	4 hours.
For 30 years	3600 days or 10 years.	Daily visit of 10 minutes to the Blessed Sacrament, six times a week	1 hour.
		Preparation and thanksgiving for the monthly Confession and Communion	1 hour
		Daily Angelus for a month	1 hour.

Result:	Result: 14+4+4+1+1=
	.....24 hours.
	Twenty-four hours a month
	is one day in.....30 days.
	one year in.....30 years.
For 60 years.....20 years.	two years in.....60 years.

If you look at this table you will be astonished at the difference of the time allowed to a necessity which physical nature makes obligatory, beside what is granted to an obligation which our spiritual nature imposes upon us.

Who would say that the man whose life conformed to the above time-table in the matter of prayer and sleep, providing he kept himself free from grievous sin, was not leading a Christian life? But supposing he does even less than that—and there are thousands who do much less—what then? Supposing that the scale were balanced otherwise; that the arm which was weighted with prayer were lightened and the other that was weighing up sleep were made heavier with hours and hours passed in a moral stupor of pleasure, dissipation and sin—then would not God write against his account the word Thecel?—which, as Daniel interpreted to Baltassar, means: "Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting."

Or let us put it in another way. Supposing a man did not square his life even to the meager demands of such a time-table like the above, yet so as to keep himself free from mortal sin; in that case would Daniel's appraisement of him be the same as was his judgment

of the king of Babylon? Do not answer "No!" without reflection.

An old writer has observed that there are many men who are blessed with a happy temperament of mind and a pious education, which not only secures them against the corruption of the world but also diminishes for them the number and violence of temptations to sin; such individuals, in that their preservation from grievous sin and from a wicked life, is almost entirely providential, have nothing to pride themselves about; especially is this true, if they are leading an indolent though otherwise harmless and inoffensive life. By trifling it away immoderately upon games and different pastimes, they become criminal while they deem themselves innocent. Loss of time is an abuse of it, and amusements innocent in themselves may become criminal in their excess. The lives of such men may not be liable to the imputation of being sinful, but are sins of omission less grave than sins of commission, and is idleness and sloth not as much a capital sin as are the other six? An indolent, neutral life will help to weigh down the wrong side of the scale as effectually as any positive sin.

And here permit me a digression on the value of time.

Time like eternity is an abstract idea and a mystery. It has never been defined. Philosophers in all the ages have attempted but have failed to tell us what it is. We have no conception of time for it has no real existence outside of our own minds. Time is our way of reckoning that infinitesimal bit of eternity which we can remember; that insignificant span, called the span of life, which separates for us the everlasting past from the

eternal future. "Time is nothing in itself; it is only real in the actual succession or successive explication or progress of existences. Time is simply the order in which events succeed; the order in which things have been or are to be." This is Dr. Brownson's definition.

But if philosophically considered, time is nothing in itself, it is of infinite value in its potentiality. Or to express myself more clearly let me put it in this way: A half hour is only thirty fleeting minutes; but those minutes may be so fraughted with good or evil that a man's eternal happiness or eternal woe may be wrought within the interval.

Time has indeed a concrete value. From the earliest ages men have been engaged in measuring it, since so much depends upon its exact computation. The position of the shadow cast by a stick stuck in the ground is even to this day the clock of the savage; the sun-dial and water-clock are as old as the world; the calendar goes back to the pre-Christian era. The Jews from the remotest times computed the day from sunrise to sunset; you have only to open the Holy Bible to find that the people of God were familiar with the principles of Horology.

Time-keeping and the value of time are in evidence throughout nature. The sun rises and sets at fixed intervals; the stars make the circuit of the universe without deviating a hair's breadth from the path assigned or losing a minute of the time fixed for them. The seasons come and go with regularity. Animals of almost every grade have some instintctive knowledge of the time appointed for their feeding, of the time

for their hibernation and awakening, of their migration and return; a time for meeting in flocks or herds; they have "ideas of time, number, order, and of the succession of events." This instinct or faculty of time-sense is of extreme importance to irrational nature; the idea and appreciation of time is of more importance to rational creatures in regulating the affairs of their temporal lives; the value of time is of infinite importance to man in his relation to eternal life.

We know how sternly men in their dealings with one another, in the matter of engagements, of employment and contracts, insist upon, and rightly so, the being on time and employing time. According to the ethics of business life, the loss of or the misemployment of time is equivalent to theft; it is a violation of justice for which in the shape of fines or dismissal, retribution is demanded and obtained.

What then must be the importance of time to man in his relation to God his absolute Master! How important for every man in regard to God and to himself is it that he value and employ every moment of his time as his conscience and religion dictate.

A good life is nothing more than a conscientious employment of time; such a life is made up of prayer and good works.

The life of a good Christian, the life of a servant of God, is a continual prayer. He prays not only when engaged specifically in communing with God, but also by every effort he makes to avoid sin, by every duty of his state in life which he performs; yea, more: by making a Good Intention, even such of his acts that

in themselves are indifferent, he turns into a prayer and a service to God, according to the teaching of St. Paul: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God."

For having kept these words of the holy Apostle in mind many a saint has accomplished in a few years what many an ordinary Christian has failed to achieve in a long life. It is the recollection of the full and generous service which the faithful soul has given God, that makes its going out from this world so peaceful and happy.

Mother de Brechard, one of the co-foundresses of the Order of the Visitation, died in the odor of sanctity at Riom, 1637. When the Superior was trying in a gentle, roundabout way, to inform her that death was at hand, the sick Sister quickly interrupted her and exclaimed: "What! Mother, do you mean that I am going to die? Oh, the sweet word! To leave this land of exile!" and she threw her arms around her Superior's neck, thanking her for the good news. Then turning to the Sisters, she exclaimed: "Ah, how kind of my good Mother, who has come to tell me that I shall soon go to see my God! Oh, what joy, what happiness!" Thus she died at fifty-seven years of age, laden with works and merits.

(See Bougaud-St. Chantal.)

PENSEE d'AMIEL.

I.

ALONE,
I craved what I would give,
The stay of friendly voice and heart;
But none, to warm, had will or art,
The cold days I must live
ALONE.

II.

ALONE,
To toil as years go by,
Nor staff to help the yielding frame;
How chills my heart to efforts tame,
To know that I must die
ALONE.

III.

ALONE,
Within the silent grave!
Faint heart, be still! May I not share
This solitude with my Savior?—
If but His company I crave
ALONE.

TAKE UP AND READ!

Charles Reade, the novelist, claimed that he had on hand evidence for every statement he made and for every fact he asserted. That may be so; but the evidence itself may be as unreliable as the facts which they essay to support, are spurious. The best that can be said of his books is that the student may ignore them without detriment to his literary standing. In the "Cloister and Hearth," so full of slanderous inuendoes against the Catholic Church, the author introduces the Italian bandits and in a casual way refers to a practice that by implication existed among them some centuries ago; a practice so horrible as to be incredible, called the Vendetta.

"The lesser vendetta, is the death of the body only," the professional assassin explains; "we watch our man come out of a church, or take him in an innocent hour and so deal with him. In the greater vendetta we follow him and catch him hot from some unrepented sin and so slay his soul as well as his body. As you know, I will rid you of your enemy according to the first or according to the second method; it is all a matter of money."

This may be fiction or it may be fact. It does not fit in with my present purpose either to prove or to disprove the statement. There is a proverb, however,

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which says that truth is stranger than fiction. If the vendetta, as the novelist describes it, is fiction, we can match it with fact. Is not the poisoning of wells, to cite an instance, as horrible; so horrible that even the most barbarous code of military warfare forbids it? But what is the writing and purveying of bad books and papers other than a poisoning of wells? What are those decrees of godless governments expunging the the name of God from the school books, excepting a poisoning of wells; what else, but the proclamation of the "greater vendetta," which stipulates to slay the soul of its victim? Upon the same ground, when men unite to establish a system of education and without excuse bar the study of Religion from the class room, in what does such a system which conspires to destroy the spiritual life of the young, differ from a vendetta?

But to return to books. Many a man whom the world calls great, will regret during all eternity that he has written a book. Bocaccio tried in vain to ease the pain inflicted upon his conscience by his poisoned quill; his disciple Chaucer upon his deathbed—and how many writers since, God only knows!—would have expurgated with his blood, the sensuous lines which he wrote in a loose hour. Friends and enemies of God, alike recognize the apostolate of the Book. The conversion of St. Augustine and of St. Ignatius Loyola, to mention but two well-known examples, speak for the power of the good book. The perversion of George Eliot, and the apostasy of Robert Elsmere the fictional hero in the novel of that name, attest the power of the

bad book. The radical distinction between Christian and Pagan Humanism arose from the difference in attitude with which the ancient classics were taken up and studied. It was the Encyclopedists who made half Europe godless.

"How strange a case is that of a book!" writes Count von Stolberg. "There it lies before you, a thing which you regard with suspicion or fear, knowing not whether the spirit it breathes is of God or of the devil. Within its covers, spirits exist rapt in magic slumber, deep as the sleep of death; as soon, however, as the pages are loosed, the spell is broken and a world of spirits, either good or bad, are in pantomime before your gaze. Be not rash nor over-daring, heedless youth! Roland's sword will not secure thee against the charm of magic when even the club of Hercules was powerless against the potency of the Black Art! And thou, tender maiden, with the blush of innocence upon thy face, what urges thee without cause, to tamper with danger?"

We are so easily caught by the charm of a great name. If an author is a great writer then no matter what he writes, it is great, it is classic, even if it is destructive of faith and morals. We regard him, not of course, on account of his impiety or immorality, but for his classicism! But what does the Scripture say? "He that toucheth the pitch shall be defiled with it."

Is he a great gardener who plants and raises to perfection the poisonous henbane and the deadly nightshade? A book is a great book and a good book if it

allays and tranquilizes passion and leads and incites to an admiration and the practice of virtue. If on the contrary, it excites the corrupt appetites, if its tendency is to lessen the reader's esteem for virtue and religion, the book is bad and should be burnt.

Some one has justly remarked that if you wish to rescue a man from an evil life and confirm him in good, you must get him to read good books. The reverse of this is equally true; namely, that if a virtuous person is given to desultory reading or to a habit—let the excuse be what it will—of looking into books of all kinds, his fervor will not last nor will his virtue endure. I will go a step further and say that even in matters of legitimate and necessary study, as is for example the study of history, the student or scholar, should complement his reading with spiritual works, ascetical writings and the Lives of the Saints.

To me no study is so depressing as that of history whether ecclesiastical or secular, unless it is relieved by the letters, the memoirs, and the accounts of the life and labors of godfearing men, of the servants of God and of the saints. Church History without these supplementary sources to draw from is nothing but the sorry record of the ceaseless combat between the children of light and the children of darkness, in which the children of darkness fill out nearly every page. It is a glorious narrative no doubt, in that it shows the Hand of God at work leading His Church from triumph to triumph, in spite of persecution and schism and heresy and treason and apostasy; but a dismal story

all the same, filled with monotonous melancholy revelations of the aberrations of the human mind and of right reason, of man's religious and philosophic doubts. Epochs come under study during which, to judge from the brief, meager, imperfect statement of history, all religious life was dead or nearly so; epochs, when the very shepherds of the Church with the exeception of half a dozen more or less, seem to have been hirelings. And yet it was not so. The Church is holy, was always and will always be holy. Holiness is one of her marks. Therefore, there never was a time when sanctity was not in evidence amongst her children. But this sanctity of her children does not appear in the pages of history. As when during a tropic storm the sun for a moment throws a brilliant ray through an opening in the wilderness of clouds, so does the life of a saint flash for an instant through the darkness of conflict which envelopes the Church, only to disappear as suddenly. How many a child would find it difficult to enumerate the twelve Apostles, and how many an adult, to relate the facts of their missionary toil and manner of death; but there is not a single child or adult who is not conversant with the treason of Judas and his unhappy end.

History to be properly read must be helped out with the biographies of the servants of God and of the saints. Who that is not familiar with the life of St. Benedict and his disciples, can form an adequate idea of Christian life and morals during the period of the Migration of Nations? What conception has he of the inner life of the Church during the thirteenth and

fourteenth centuries, who has never read the lives of St. Francis and St. Dominic and their disciples? If you think that the religious decay in the sixteenth century, which made the breach with Rome which men often speak of as the Reformation, possible; if you think, this religious decay was universal among clergy and laity, then read the lives of St. Ignatius and his companions; of St. Theresa and her reforms; read of the labors and the apostolate of St. Peter of Alcantara, of St. John of the Cross, of St. Francis Borgia, and of the many other saints of the time, and you will believe otherwise. Your view of the Huguenot Wars and of the Jansenistic machinations in their effects upon the Church, can be only a biased one, unless you are familiar with the life-history of the great bishop of Geneva, St. Francis de Sales and that of his co-worker St. Jane de Chantal; with the labors of St. Vincent de Paul and that of his many saintly and illustrious contemporaries. The Rev. T. C. Middleton O. S. A., in a historical introductory sketch to the Life of St. Thomas Villanova, very justly protests against that one-sided study of history which has taught and still teaches that "Luther's Order, with its principal members, were the apostate's warmest advocates." This distortion of the truth would never have been possible if the student while studying the history of the Great Apostasy had looked into the life of the holy Archbishop of Valencia or that of any of that galaxy of learned and saintly Augustinians who lived and labored during the time that intervened between Luther's revolt and the Council of Trent.

You will perhaps ask what Spiritual Reading has to do with the study of history. Nothing at all, I reply. Spiritual Reading has a very different and higher purpose. Your question, however, is not to the point, for the following reflections have for object the value of good books in general.

Aside from the spiritual profit derived from them, we assert that one profit, and a very great profit, which results from the perusal of them, is this, that thereby history becomes more edifying and the saddest and most scandalizing of its periods are lighted up as justice and truth demand, with the record of the lives of the millions of faithful children of Holy Church. Ascetical writings, the biographies of the servants of God, the lives of the saints, missionary journals, the history of the foundation of Religious Orders—an acquaintance with these sources of information will not only give a fuller and juster view of history but will also afford an insight into the Philosophy of History, and lead to a saner appreciation of literature.

The real philosophy of history will be known only at the end of time; it is the purpose of the General Judgment to reveal it to us. We have attempts at a Philosophy of History in St. Augustine's The City of God, in Bossuet's Discourse on Universal History, in Balmes' Protestantism and Catholicity Compared; but they are only fractional; moreover, because the mind of even the greatest philosopher, is shallow and his judgment fallible, such a history cannot be final and exhaustive. But all the same, some such attempt must be made by

every one who wishes to read history correctly. Such an attempt is made by the supplementary readings above referred to. With its help the eye will scan the pages of history with the Christian philosophic view that God is the prime Mover and men are His pawns; with the philosophic view of the good noble general and politician, von Radowitz, when he said of politics, that it is merely a drama in which men vex themselves and God leads them.

Just as necessary as to history and to the philosophy of history, is the reading of good books to a correct appraisement of literature. We are so apt to imitate what we admire; admiration is the first step to conviction; what delights the mind is apt also to touch the heart. He that studies the classics from pagan and non-Christian, or anti-Christian models solely, cannot help but be warped in judgment and weakened in morals. To be wholly ignorant of the classic writings of Holy Church is deplorable because it leads to an over-admiration and over-estimation of secular literature. The more exclusive a gift or a thing is, the more it is valued. If the Church has no literature at all, the more will we appreciate what the world has in this respect. Then again, how is the Church to mould and temper and moderate our literary taste, if none but the secular classics come under study?

Now then, our Holy Church has her classics, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and a great many other books, classic also, written by doctors in the Church and moreover, works of Spiritual

Writers, which we must read if our taste and judgment are to be correct according to the highest principles of the good, the beautiful, and the true. In the very beginning of the Renaissance Pope Martin V. justly remarked: "While we have Augustine, what care we for the sagacity of Aristotle, the eloquence of Plato, the prudence of Varro? We do not need these men. Augustine is enough for us." Any text book on Oratory will affirm and prove that the Fathers of the Church, both Greek and Latin, were models of diction and eloquence. It is well known that the best historians of Spanish literature, Ticknor for example, look on the writings of St. Theresa as models of pure Castilian. Her letters in particular are said to be written in a style incomparable for simplicity, naturalness and kindly wit. Henry Suso, according to Father Baumgartner S. J. the distinguished literary critic, wrote the most beautiful German prose in the fourteenth century; and could turn with ease and accuracy the most difficult scholastic phrases into the vernacular.

The letters of the devout Madam Swetchine are models of the epistolary style. Her volume of letters, said the bishop of Orleans, Mgr. Dupanloup, was one of three books most read and applauded in his day; the other two were, "A Sister's Story," by Mrs. Craven, and the Memoirs of Eugene de Guerin. The authors in each case were Catholic ladies. We can match them in English literature by three equally distinguished writers of the feminine sex, and all convent-bred: Alice Meynell, Agnes Repplier and Imogen Guiney. Beginning with

Cardinal Newman, the foremost classic writer of his age, and of his contemporaries, the Cardinals Wiseman and Manning, where would the list end, if I were to enumerate all the great writers in England, Ireland and America of our Catholic Nineteenth Century Renaissance?

The reading of good books ascetical and biographical, is necessary then in the domain of literature and history; it is especially necessary in the study of Church History if the student wishes to arrive at a just and full view of the Church not merely as she is affected by the blindness and perversity of her enemies but also as she is vindicated and glorified by the holiness of life of so many of her children. Only he is properly acquainted with the Church who knows the history of her triumphs as well as the history of her trials.

As to the spiritual fruit which is derived from good books, suffice it to say in the words of the learned and pious Father Faber, that pious reading is the greatest non-supernatural support of the spiritual life. With the old Benedictine proverb in mind, that a monastery without a library is a castle without an armory, the place that Good Reading holds in the Benedictine Order and the esteem with which it is regarded, is sufficiently emphasized.

THE ODOR OF DEATH.

By way of analogy to the Short Lesson I. Peter V. 8. with which Compline opens, to wit: "Brethren, be sober, and watch; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist ye, strong in faith;" I have found nothing more fitting or realistic, than a fact in Natural History vouched for in The Voyage of the Beagle. It is about the Caracara. The Caracara is a bird of South America and belongs to the carrion-feeding hawks. It is the most disgusting of its species; it rarely kills any living bird or animal. The revolting and horror-inspiring trait in the habits of these vulture-like birds is their watching over and sinister pursuit of man or beast, who by a flagging step shows evidence of exhaustion and gives promise of a speedy death. This instinct of tracking their expectant prey is so desperately and continually on the alert, that should an adventurer or explorer wish to rest himself by lying down to sleep for half an hour or an hour anywhere on the desolate plains of Patagonia, he would be disagreeably surprised upon awakening to find perched upon hillocks in a circle around him, those ominous birds like sentinels of the dead watching him with their fiery, wicked eyes, impatiently waiting to begin their funeral meal.

Is not this a repulsive but a true picture of what finds its counterpart in the spiritual life? Whether under the metaphor of a lion or of a carrion-feeding hawk, the enemies human and demoniacal, which lie in wait for unwary innocence, are fitly typified. But they will not approach or harm, they will keep far away from him, who is in spiritual health, that is, who is pious, pure and mortified, and who frequents the Sacraments. It is he who trifles with temptations and is careless in the choice of books and pictures, of plays and dress and company; it is such a one, who in a moral sense, is beginning to pant and halt and faint on the way and who will soon succumb, whom these knowing birds of evil flutter around and pursue as a victim in promise.

The word "victim," however, is ill-chosen. A victim of sin is one who has become a slave of sin more through the fault of another than through his own. That victims, according to this interpretation of the word may be found, we admit; but that they are common, we deny. The words of the old pagan Appius Claudius hold for all time: "Every man is the shaper of his own destiny." No man can become or be made a sinner against his will. It was the distinctive character of the Decian persecution to subject the spouses of Christ to shameful temptations. Many a time they were preserved from physical violence by a miraculous interposition. But even where God did not directly interpose, their virginal souls came forth unscathed from the ordeal, howsoever in integrity of body they

may have suffered. The answer of St. Lucia to the infamous threat of Paschasius is as true as it is sublime: "If thou cause this poor body to be violated, the crown of my soul's purity will be brighter through suffering."

There is not a railroad station in the United States where, upon a printed placard, the warning is not conspicuously posted, advising girls who are traveling, to be on their guard against any and every officious stranger. No doubt, these public notices have saved many an unwary and inexperienced maiden from insult and ruin. But the impression which these warnings at every turn and step, leave upon the mind of the casual reader, is not borne out by fact. Not every girl who has been victimized, as the expression goes, nor even the majority of them, have been entrapped by the tempter, without some advance on their part. Certainly, there are sad exceptions to the truth of this statement; but these exceptions cannot nullify it. It may not be in other countries as it is here in our own. In the United States it is seldom that a woman is treated discourteously or is even approached excepting on her own initiative. For years hardly a week has passed that the writer was not journeying somewhere in the street-cars and train. He sees the young and middle-aged feminine folk going to and coming from work; off for, and returning from pleasure-gardens, theatres and resorts; yet in all these years he has never seen a woman young or old, whether in a public conveyance, on the railroad, or in the city streets, at any time or

in any place, pursued or stopped or interfered with. Indeed, whenever as strangers, the two sexes met for light talk and pleasantries or for other exhibitions of cordiality which it is not necessary to denominate, it was the feminine and not the masculine side that made the first step and went more than half way. Here is an example. A sodality with a roll-call of more than two hundred and fifty girls ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-five years, had but one member, during a period of five years who went astray, or to put it popularly, who was "led astray;" and this notwithstanding the fact, that this sodality in question was recruited of young ladies from the poorer homes in a congested district of a Metropolitan City, who, all of them were compelled to make their living in one way or another, as school-teachers or office-assistants; as clerks in stores, as sales-women or as factory-hands.

A modest, virtuous girl, has her Guardian Angel as protector at her side, and as panoply to turn the poisoned darts aimed against her, the love and fear of God. These remarks are of universal application. Sin is a personal act. A man may yield himself up blindly to his passions or to the influence of others, but before doing so he has deliberated and realized that for better or for worse, he and no one else is the shaper of his destiny.

No man is the sport of chance or of fate; for there is no fate. It is a rule of common sense and of Revelation as laid down to Cain, before as yet his desperate act had dyed the earth with a brother's blood: "If

thou do well shalt thou not receive? but if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door? but the lust thereof shall be under thee and thou shalt have dominion over it."

"Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together." Matt. xxxiv, 28. It is upon medical authority I have it, that when death has ensued and long before any of the grosser signs of decomposition have yet become apparent, an all-prevading odor discernible by those who know, issues from the body from which the soul has fled—the odor of death. Just so, a soul in mortal sin, a soul therefore that is dead, is an abomination in the sight of heaven and a stench before the Lord. As the fragrance of incense differs from the noisome scent of decay, so in the moral order, does the odor of virtue differ from the odor of sin.

To the celestial fragrance which oftentimes attaches to the bodies of saints living and dead, it is not an uncommon phenomenon in the spiritual life to find servants of God endowed with a privilege which enables them to detect even in a sensible way, this odor of virtue or of spiritual death, as the case may be. It will suffice to refer to the Life of St. Philip Neri, where many instances of the kind are on record which will bear me out. Moreover, as the saints by a sixth sense or some spiritual instinct are made aware of the danger of sin, no matter how artfully concealed, that may lurk in persons, places or things, so, on the other hand, the wicked also, are as instinctively keen in recognizing

their prey and every place and opportunity where sinful pleasures and its addicts may be found.

There is nothing disheartening in all this. For after all, according to the forcible words of St. Paul to the Romans, it is only "if you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live."

The odor of death which permeates everything here below, if humiliating is also suggestive and salutary. We know its origin and what its sequel will be. There is nothing blameworthy in the fact that men and women try to conceal and to obliterate the signs and the effects of that incipient death which is in us all, by ointments and lotions and fragrances; it is as excusable and pathetic a practice, as are the expedients to which the doomed man has recourse to deceive himself and others, when the first fleck of leprosy on his body surprises him.

But in this are men criminally blameworthy, if they will not destroy the odor and its cause, of spiritual death about them, by a holy Confession and conversion to a virtuous life.

If it is not true in the natural, it is certainly true in the supernatural order, that a man is what he chooses to be. In mortal sin, he is a legitimate subject of satan; in the state of grace, he belongs to God; and God Whom he daily addresses as Our Father will not give him over against his will to his enemies but will heed his petition "deliver us from evil."

THE APPLE TREE.

I saw a fair young apple tree
With ruddy blossoms bright;
And in and out the branches 'mong,
A blooming child in white.

Her lips and cheeks and tresses full
Like floral clusters swayed;
'Twere hard to tell but in a lull,
The tree-bloom from the maid.

Up came a nipping northern wind
In the moon of an April night;
With frost, I saw a wilt tree, lined,
And a maid in mock-bloom dight.

"THOU ART SO LIKE A FLOWER."

Nach Heine.

(To a Child on its First-Communion Day.)

Thou art so like a flower
Sweet-blushing to the morn;
Each day within our bower
New joy with thee is born.

More charming than the flower
Know thou no wilting doom;
So God safeguard thy dower
Thou wilt our home embloom.

What sin is that? Let the sequel show. We have just finished reading the liturgical lessons for Twelfth-Day, the Epiphany of the Lord. Two popes, St. Leo and St. Gregory, both called The Great upon the double claim of learning and sanctity, come each in turn to the lectern to tell us how the wickedness of a king served the design of God to carry the story of Christ's birth over all the world. The coming of the Wise Men from the East to Bethlehem was the first Epiphany of Christ; it was to the pagans, of which, as St. Augustine says, we are the in-gathering. But it was not His last Epiphany, for His every appearance amongst men, whether in the temple or in the desert, on the mountain-side or by the sea or upon the uplands and in the valleys of Gallilee and Judea, were manisfestations of His Divinity.

Such an Epiphany therefore, was His presence at the Wedding of Cana, in the company, as the Evangelist expressly states, of His disciples. He came to the marriage feast to declare by His example that the reformation of the world must begin with the purification and the elevation of marriage; and He came not alone but accompanied by His disciples, to indicate that this work would be assigned to and accomplished

by His Church. At this her hardest task the Church is still working and will always work because, opposed to its accomplishment, she will forever find leagued against herself the lowest and strongest passions of men and the most ingenious and perverse maxims and tenets of corrupt society and of false religions. The half-civilized heathens of Asia and Africa refuse to accept the yoke of Christian Matrimony; the civilized heathens of the Western World, seek to cast it off. For tampering with the sanctity of marriage which Christ raised to the dignity of a Sacrament, individuals and families have gone out of the Church; for refusing to accept it as indissoluble, many have refused and many now refuse to enter her pale. It is not then surprising that the cause of nearly every conflict between the popes and the secular princes had its source in the rebuke such as the intrepid John the Baptist hurled at the impious Herod: "It is not lawful for you to have her." Smarting under the rebuke of the Precursor of the Messias, it happened that the first Epiphany, on the part of the elder Herod, was signalized by the massacre of the Holy Innocents; the second, through the instrumentality of Antipas was glorified by the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist.

This then is the eternal sin of the Herods father and son; eternal in its ever-widening notoriety, eternal in its punishment. As the crime of Pilate is rehearsed at every recitation of the Creed, so is the infamy of the Herods handed down from generation to generation at every annual recurrence of Holy Three Kings' Day.

On the outskirts of Jerusalem lies the Valley of Josaphat. Among the innumerable graves and monuments which dot this valley and border the sides of the hills which inclose it, the grave of Absolom, King David's favorite but undutiful son, is pointed out even to this day to tourists and pilgrims. Although forced to yield his life in its bloom, his crime lives on forever. Millions upon millions of children as they become acquainted with his history, learn to despise him and to abhor his example. The infidel Turk should he chance to pass his grave, casts a stone upon it and curses the name of Absolom. Even the dead in the valley of Josaphat crowding one another for space, shun him and dispute not his acre.

It is in a fact like this, of a guilt that never dies, the shame and punishment of which not only lives but grows with the added execrations of each succeeding age that we may arrive at some understanding of the endless tortures of hell.

Every sin, certainly every mortal sin, is eternal in its consequences. Under certain aspects, this is true even of those which have been contritely confessed and forgiven. Every sin is eternal, because it remains eternally true that we have committed it and that it can never be recalled. Every sin is the sowing of seed in our hearts and in the hearts of others, which seed will ripen unto harvest. Every sin forever lessens what grace God had in store for us and strengthens our inclination to evil; and worst of all, nearly every grievous sin is the source of scandal the fruitage of

which no one can foresee. Sin, then, under a double aspect, is eternal. However, God is infinitely good and will welcome back the sinner who strives to retrace his steps and to be converted. St. Gregory the Great in his tenth homily on the Gospels, interpreting in a spiritual sense this reference to the Wise Men that "they returned into their country another way," says; "We have left our country far, by the way of pride, and disobedience, and wordliness and forbidden pleasures; we must seek that heavenly Fatherland by tears, by subjection, by contempt of the things which are seen and by curbing the fleshly appetites." That too, is what St. Augustine means when he says: "Dost thou fear God? Then fly to His arms!"

SEE THE PRIEST.

It is not with any special pleasure or admiration that we read the "Meditations of Marcus Aurelius," or the Confessions and Thoughts and Maxims, of any pagan, ancient or modern. Let those read and study and laud them to the skies who have not the Holy Scriptures or Thomas a Kempis' Imitation of Christ. Neither do we quote with predilection the casual statements of agnostics and unbelievers when they chance to hold a truth which accords with the teachings of Revelation. It is no compliment to the Chuch to cite in her favor the occasional truthful testimony of philosophers and thinkers outside her pale. What can the fitful gleam of a rushlight add to the brilliant glare of a lighthouse? If then in the course of these reflections the words of the pagan and infidel are now and then referred to, it is chiefly for the benefit of those hero-worshipers within and outside the Church, who will follow a leader let him be as blind in spiritual matters as a bat in midday, to heaven or to hell.

"Professor Huxley," as vouched for by the American Quarterly Review of the year 1880, "tells us that come what may to our intellectual beliefs and even education, the beauty of holiness and the ugliness of sin will remain for those that have eyes to see them, no mere metaphors but real and intense feelings." No indeed;

the beauty of holiness and virtue and the ugliness of sin and vice, are not mere metaphors. The "higher men of to-day," the miscalled "enlightened," tell the sin-laden man to forget his sins; that the wickedness of sinful acts is chimerical; that his acts carry no sanction; they tell him to eat and drink and distract himself and all will be well. Fools and deceivers that they are! Man has been trying this for the past six thousand years; trying to forget his sins. But his sins will not remain forgotten. After every effort to blot the recollection of them from out his mind they will return accusingly with double force. Try as he will, the conviction remains that the evil deeds of life must be faced and answered and atoned for. It is the conscience within him that gives the lie direct to all such teachers of falsehood, and confirms what Holy Church teaches about Penance and Holy Confession. "Go show thyself to the priest," said Christ to the leper. This ritual injunction that bound every man who had been cleansed from physical leprosy, was a figure of the sacramental command which since the institution of the Sacrament of Penance rests upon all the children of the Church who have come to the age of reason and have sinned. With this difference however, that the priest does not merely attest and ceremonially declare the moral leper who comes to him as clean or unclean; but in Christ's name and at His command, through the power of absolution, actually cleanses the sinner from his spiritual leprosy. Without Baptism no man can be saved; without the Sacrament of Penance,

the majority of the baptized, children excepted, would be barred from heaven. It is for this reason that Christ Who died to save all men, has placed the holy Sacrament within the reach of all. For what do we read in Ezekiel? "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his evil way, and live." God's wonderful condescension and infinite love in bringing men to penance appears in manifold and oftentimes in miraculous ways.

Of Dr. Polding O. S. B., first Archbishop of Sydney and Primate of Austalia, the book "Benedictine Pioneers in Australia," relates this touching incident: "Bishop Polding never lost an opportunity of drawing souls to God. One dark night he was traveling through Illamarra. He was being guided through the bush by the son of an Irish settler; whilst conversing with the youth, the bishop found that for a long time he had not been to his religious duties. It was very dark and pouring with rain, but the bishop got off his horse, tied him to a tree, sat on the trunk of another fallen tree, got the boy to kneel on the wet ground and heard his confession. The next time he went that way he inquired for the boy and found that he had been killed whilst feeling a tree."

Among the experiences that touch upon the supernatural which the writer can personally vouch for, the following is one among many:

It was on a Saturday morning that a stranger called at the rectory to introduce himself to the priest. He

was accompanying his brother who was not well, to some sanitarium,—they had not yet definitely decided upon the place,—for a rest-cure. Without any invitation, and indeed for no special reason, I called upon the brothers that evening at the hotel where they had put up. They were teamsters from Minneapolis, tall, lithe and robust looking; I had never seen finer specimens of manhood in my life. After a social talk of half an hour or so I proposed to hear the confession of the ailing brother. He remonstrated with me, alleging there was no urgent need for it, that he was not ready, and that when he had rested up a day or two he would come to the church. I rejoined that since he had an opportunity then and there to receive the Sacrament it were better not to put it off. The remarkable thing however, is this, that after having heard and absolved him, I insisted that he receive Extreme Unction also. To this he still more reluctantly agreed, "for" said he, "I feel all right." In truth, he looked it too, sitting in a rocker and quite jolly. Early Sunday morning his brother again called upon me; it was with the news that John, the brother, whom I had annointed the night before, was dead. A terrible paroxysm of suffocation had carried him off during the night.

Such cases as the above, of providential interference in behalf of poor mortals when their last hour is near, are so common, that I will relate no more of the kind, but turn to an example which reveals the ingenuity of the love of God in another way. This story turns upon a misspelled or misread address. I can recall

it readily; but the source from whence I obtained it has escaped my mind. The Superior of the Oratory at Avignon who was a saintly priest, had a pious friend by the name of Saze whom he often visited. To this good friend he wrote that he would spend Shrove Tuesday with him. He directed the letter properly; but the carrier misread the address and delivered it to Mr. Suze instead of to Mr. Saze for whom it was intended. This Mr. Suze was a rich man, the owner of a fine house and large estate, and a high and gay liver. He was at table surrounded by his boon companions whom he had invited to his country-seat to join him in celebrating the Carnival, when the letter was handed him. His surprise was boundless when he read that the pious, austere Oratorian, meant to pay him a visit. The more he thought over the matter the stranger it appeared to him. He became reflective, uncommunicative, melancholy. The guests noticed the change that had come over him and tried to rally him out of his ill-humor, but without success. They left him therefore to enjoy his gloom alone and returned to the city. That night the rich man could not sleep. His conscience. bitterly upraiding him for the past, was threatening, urging, pleading with him. He could stand it no longer. Leaping from his bed, he fell upon his knees and for hours bewailed and asked pardon of God for his many sins. By the time morning broke, he was a changed man. The first thing he did at dawn of day, was to sit down and write the holy priest an acknowledgement of his letter. He told him he was unworthy of his visit,

but that at the close of Lent he would come to the Oratory without fail to make his peace with God. In the meantime, another Religious who had heard of Suze's changed life, called upon him at his country-house. To him the repentant sinner related what had happened, and of his resolution to make a General Confession to the Superior at the convent on the vigil of Easter. The visiting priest who saw that the Finger of God was at work here, urged him not to put off his conversion till then, but to confess then and there. The man complied. After a thorough preparation which lasted the whole night through, he made a clean breast of the many sins he had committed since his last Confession thirty years ago; after which, with copious tears, he prepared to receive Holy Communion. The priest having fulfilled his mission, was just leaving the manor when he was hurriedly recalled. The master of the house, his penitent, was in his agony, from an apoplectic stroke. The dying man though speechless was still conscious; his eyes spoke what his lips could no longer utter—sorrow for his sins and gratitude for the infinite mercy of God.

No doubt, the Superior of the Oratory at Avignon when he heard of the happy death of Suze and the palpable Providence of God by which it was brought about, readily forgave the messenger the error in delivering to a stranger, the letter that was directed to his friend.

Who when reading or hearing of such examples of God's goodness, dares to impugn His justice? Not only

does He Who is the Father of every repentant prodigal; He, Who calls Himself the Good Shepherd, welcome back the lost sheep; He goes more than half way to meet it; He literally carries it back on His shoulders. Providing the sinner does not resist the loving ministrations of God's mercy, providing he yields to them gratefully, desires them and conforms himself to them—God seems to be satisfied. Is there in heaven or on earth a being angelic or human who would extend mercy to any sinner upon the same terms?

The very fact that an Examination of Conscience is necessary for nearly every Confession, proves inferentially the infinite goodness of God and the wickedness of man. I am speaking of the ordinary, the lukewarm Catholic. Now think of it! So low and so often has he fallen, that upon the instant he cannot even recall, neither the degree of his guilt nor the number of his sins. See what this means through a comparison. A son who has offended a most loving father, wishes to be reconciled to him; but before seeking reconciliation this son must first study for fifteen minutes or half an hour, for how long a time he has been estranged from and has hated his father, and whether it is ten or twenty or a hundred times that he has mortally offended him; and this mind you, in spite of the many times he had been pardoned before. Where is there a parent who would bear with such an unnatural offspring? The Gospel stories of the Prodigal Son and of the Good Shepherd, are not drawn from real life. Such a father as the Prodigal had and that Good Shepherd of the

Scriptures, are not found amongst men. As types they have been and are realized in Christ alone.

Mary Magdalen will affirm it; the woman taken in adultery, also; and the Good Thief and Peter and Paul. Infinitely just as God is, it is well for us that our eternal fate will be decided before His tribunal and not before the judgment seat of man. However, let us not dare to presume upon God's mercy, but remember, that if the conditions for obtaining pardon,—sorrow, confession, satisfaction, are not complied with—conditions, so just, so easy and within the compass of any ordinary good will, the wrath of God will strike us and we will have none but ourselves to blame for the loss of our soul.

WHY DO WE NOT SEE GOD?

Why do we not see God? Because, God being a spirit, cannot be seen with bodily eyes, says the Penny Catechism. The answer is correct as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough; it is not exhaustive.

We admit that the physical eye by its natural power alone cannot see God. But God is infinitely wise and powerful and can if He will, in one or other of a thousand ways, enable the eye of the body to see Him, and the ear to hear Him, and the human tongue to converse with him, sensibly and audibly and face to face. Our souls are spirits and they communicate one with another through the organs of speech; surely, if not through the instrumentality of tongue and lips, then in some other equally facile and ready way, if it pleased God to will it, we could converse with Him and He with us.

The Holy Scriptures have little to say of man's relation to God before the Primal Fall. They were written chiefly to record the sin of our First Parents and its consequences to themselves and their children; to relate God's mercy toward man to tell of the Redeemer Who was promised, and to point out to fallen man the conditions upon which he may again become a child of God and heir of heaven. Nevertheless, though this is the burden of the Scriptures, there is enough in the first

pages of Genesis to convince us that in the beginning God communicated with His children in some visible tangible manner, as an earthly father converses with the members of his family. Such intercourse to-day would be called miraculous; it was not miraculous in the case of Adam and Eve. This miracle of divine intercourse has taken place time and again since the Fall; rarely and at long intervals under the Old Dispensation, more frequently under the New. Moses conversed with God on the mountain; Saul on his way to Damascus when struck to the ground by a light from heaven, heard the words: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" What is the Apocalypse but a record of the sublime things St. John heard and saw when rapt in spirit to another world, during the days of his exile at Patmos?

And amongst the thousands of well-authenticated cases of sensible communication between God and His servants, does not the wonderful and beautiful devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, so highly approved of by the Church, rest upon the appearance and promises of Christ spoken to St. Margaret Mary Alocoque? If then, for a second time, I ask the question, Why do we not see and hear and why can we not in a sensible way, speak to God? my answer is, because we are spiritually blind and deaf and dumb.

This paralysis of the spiritual senses is common to all men but in various degrees. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." The heathen sees God confusedly in His works;

he mistakes the reflection of God for God himself, and adores secondary causes for the First Cause. The blindness of the atheist is still more pitiable; it is opaque and incurable. The condition of the agnostic and of the skeptic is not much better.

I read in some American Review, many years ago, of a self-satisfied undergraduate of Oxford, who with a little knowledge of the great World Religions, possessed also a smattering of Philosophy. He met Professor Jowett in the quadrangle of Balliol College one day and in the course of conversation which ensued, gravely remarked: "Professor, in all my research I have not found any evidence of a personal God." "Indeed," said the master; "you may continue your research till five o'clock to-day; if you have not found God by that time you will leave the college." It was a good sharp answer, and the only one that could have benefitted the young, shallow skeptic.

It were well, if in our day, this incident between the professor and the student were turned round. The teacher who says he has never found any evidence to prove the existence of God, nor discovered any ground upon which Revealed Religion rests, should be peremptorily dismissed. A man who does not hesistate to proclaim his ignorance in regard to truths so elementary and necessary, is a greater scandal to his pupils and a more colossal failure as a teacher, than an idiot in the Chair would be.

The insufferable conceit and satanic pride of men, who because they know a little something in one or

other of the natural sciences, by an extraordinary confusion of principles, conclude they can speak with authority on any subject human or divine! Who will accept or deny with insolent certainty whatever they please of Revealed Religion! We are all familiar with this species of fallacy in logic.

In the following hypothetical case which is quoted from "The Outlook," by the Catholic Weekly "America," the student is treated less curtly than he deserves. "I once asked a professor of philosophy of international reputation in one of our universities," said Lyman Abbott, " 'What do you say to your students when they ask you, why do you believe in imortality?' 'I answer,' he replied, by asking them 'why do you believe in mortality?' Why indeed? Why should the decay of the body be thought to indicate the decay of the spirit? The body is in a state of perpetual decay and repair. With every exertion, physical or mental, some part of the body dies. We are engaged in a perpetual repair and rebuilding of a perpetually decaying body. The octogenarian has had probably eight or ten different bodies during his lifetime. It is not probable that an atom in my present body was in it seventy years ago. But I am still Lyman Abbott and I hope a wiser and a better man than I was three fourths of a century ago. The spirit has not only survived all this continuous bodily decay, but has grown wiser and better. Why believe that when the final decay comes, the decay of the spirit should accompany it?"

This argument seems reasonable enough. But Lyman Abbott who is a religious nondescript of the Universalist or Congregationalist kind, might very well begin with himself, and by reversing the professor's method, attend to his own case and solve the personal doubts he is wont to propose to others. For the editor of "The Outlook," calls in question truths just as fundamental and essential as that of Immortality, and upon grounds the most untenable. The suggestion however which the quotation offers, is a good one. It were well if the insolent and conceited professor were stopped every time he made one of his oracular denials of a Christian truth and challenged to prove it: "You say there is no God; how do you know? You say the soul is not immortal; prove it? You deny all Revealed Religion, and heaven and hell; what do you know more about the truths of the supernatural world than the simplest man in jeans or overalls?"

In fact, the opinion and conclusions about God and the life to come, of any ordinary person of good morals and common intelligence, is more trustworthy, than that of a scholar or scientist, for the simple reason, that the mind of the latter runs in a groove, is warped and biased. The specialist knows one thing and little of anything outside his craze. The life of the great German scholar Mommsen reads like a caricature of a great man—it is so full of facts of childish irresponsibilities, of idiotic mistakes, of gruff and boorish selfishness and unsociability. Neither his wife nor children, neither Religion nor God, shared with him his one

interest in life, History. He was a historian and a scholar, but not a man; a human being who was an authority on Caesar and his contemporaries, but not a social being, nor a father worthy of the name, nor a Christian. Mommsen is a type of a great many scholars and specialists.

Of all the forms of concupiscence, that of the intellect is the most pernicious, and of all the deceptions to which the concupiscence of the intellect has recourse to work spiritual havoc in the soul, there is none more dangerous than the pride that springs from a consciousness of knowing rare and singular things. Montesquieu shipwrecked in faith on a grotesque philosophical theory about climate; to wit, that all variations in Religion are solely dependent upon the differences in climate. Renan foundered in faith for making Religion simply a matter of Philology. These "learned men" are reliable perhaps in what pertains to their exclusive study; outside of their specialty they are but blundering guides. Like the fish in the great Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, which from living in a lake of perpetual darkness have completely lost the organ of sight, these men who pursue with feverish intensity, night and day, some art or science or temporal interest, are apt to become spiritually atrophied; their senses of spiritual sight and hearing and speech waste away and become paralyzed from non-use. Because they know not God and have never taken time to know Him, they say there is no God; and they deny Revelation and His Holy Church, simply because they know nothing about either. Like the beetle, they find burrowing

amongst the dirt and refuse of this world their happiness and destiny. Being blind they call light darkness and darkness light, and ignore that simplest essential of justice and common sense, namely, never to make a statement upon insufficient evidence. When Charles the Second chartered "The Royal Society of Scientific Research," he was disposed to give the philosophers a royal and at the same time a useful lesson. He asked: "Why is it, my lords and gentlemen, that if you fill a vessel with water to the very brim, so that it will not hold a single drop more, yet putting a turbot into the water, it will not overflow the vessel?" Many were the conjectures and answers. Some said that the fish would drink as much water as compensated for its bulk; some, that the water was compressed to that amount by the weight of the fish; others, again, that the air-bladder had something to do with the phenomenon, etc. The monarch was greatly amused. At length Christopher Wren, the architect, modestly inquired: "But is your majesty sure such would be the case" "Ah, there you have it," replied the king laughing. "Always make sure, gentlemen, that the thing is true before you proceed learnedly to account for it." It is sage advice; would that it had always been followed.

Be it said to the credit of learned men, that the master intellects among them, the profoundest scholars, the deepest thinkers, have recognized the limitations of the human mind and have kept within its sphere; in our own day, for example, Lord Kelvin in England and Pasteur in France. But following in their wake are a

great many shallow scholars and psuedo-scientists, whose only claim to recognition rests upon their daring denial of truths which the whole world regards as sacred and inviolable.

"Professor," asked a little girl of a learned man, "please tell me, what makes a perfect lily?" Obligingly he plucked up the stem and drooping flower, and to the amazement of the child, tore off the whorled leaves one after another, and discoursed learnedly the while he was dissecting the calyx and loosening each separate lobe from its corolla—"it is this makes the perfect lily." Weeping the child looked up and said, "but, Professor, where's my lily?" Oh, yes, they will tell you in learned language, as vaporous as it is meaningless, what the elements are and what light is and electricity and fire and heat. They will answer indeed, they never lack an answer; their scientific phrases roll out, filling the student with admiration and capturing the multitude. However, upon second thought, the question will return more importunately than ever, and the thoughtful student, if he dares, will ask. "But Professor, what is air and water and fire and heat and electricity?"

What, after all, have these men done for the benefit of the human race that we should so revere them? Upon what ground are we so indebted to them? If Mr. Edison for example, has given man some valuable electrical inventions, he has more than canceled the benefit thus bestowed, by the evil effect of his words and example, in blatantly denying the existence of God.

As Dr. O. E. Brownson has somewhere remarked: "No Stephenson, Watts, Fulton, Leibnitz, Newton or Franklin, can compare as benefactors of mankind with the humblest man who has converted even one soul to God. For the salvation of a single soul is worth more than the whole material world. What is any scientist before God, beside a St. Vincent de Paul or that poor Belgian mother that founded the Little Sisters of the Poor?"

"Physical science cannot compare with the science of the saints; for the one reveals nature, the other God; and the invention of the steam-boat and the engine counts nothing beside the dissemination of a single truth of Holy Religion. No uninspired man who has ever lived has done the one thousandth part for his fellowman of what St. Augustine did, and St. Gregory the Great, and St. Thomas Aquinas, whose sublime thoughts and divine science have become the life and thought of all that is great and good in this material world. Now, heaven and earth shall pass away, and all these material things will be useless to us after a few years more or less, but divine truth, and virtue which springs from it will continue with us forever." Relatively speaking, the most learned scientist and naturalist knows little or nothing; but if he knew and understood all the mysteries of nature, of what benefit would it be to him unless his knowledge helped him to know God better and love Him more? The devil has more knowledge of heaven and earth than any man and yet his eternal misery remains unchanged.

And what progress has this twentieth century really to boast of? Let me quote the pertinent words of Amiel: "Each man begins the world afresh and not one fault that Adam and his immediate children committed is avoided even by his remotest descendants. Adam sinned through sensuality; see the inebriates and sensualists around us! Cain slew Abel; see the bloodshed and murders that disgrace every community even to this day!

Where then is our progress? What if the young man is more cultivated than his father, is he not just as presumptious? and with all his learning and science is he less fallible than was man in the days before the Deluge? The man of to-day fashioned by the historical and geographical influence of twenty countries and sixty centuries, trained and modified by all the arts and sciences, the supple recipient of all literatures, is indeed an entirely new product, but is he a better product? No, indeed; man is not better, he is only different. The total balance of his defects and virtues shows him no better; if in a thousand things he advances, he falls back in nine hundred and ninety-eight; is this progress?"

We conclude these reflections by stating that the modern heathen, through his own more than through inherited fault, does not see God because he wishes not to see Him. He sees God neither in Revelation nor in His works. To him, as the poet says: "The primrose by the river's bank a primrose is, and nothing more."

The Christian alone sees God in His works, and knows Him through Revelation and the Church. This also

with a difference. The lukewarm Christian perceives God by faith but only with difficulty; responds to his words coldly, and in consequence, loses nearly all the merits that might belong to him as a child of God.

The fervent believer not only knows God through faith but he feels the presence of God oftentimes within himself; especially when at prayer, when receiving the holy Sacraments, and when kneeling before Christ in the Blessed Eucharist. The faithful soul not only knows God, but ardently loves, gladly serves, and yearns to be united to Him in heaven.

It is the saint however, who not only knows and loves God, but who at times more or less frequently, hears and sees God in a sensible way and speaks to Him face to face. Because of his heroic love and devotion in the service of God, many of the effects of the primeval curse are removed; oftentimes the birds and the beasts become subject to the saint in reward for his having first of all brought under subjection the passions within him. The veil that separates God from man, seems for him partially drawn aside and he is permitted even while on earth "to taste and see how sweet the Lord is."

"Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God," is literally verified in a greater or less degree for all who have entered upon the service of God. Purity humility, obedience, will help us to see God, will bring us to Christ, and reveal to us the errors of the augurs, and oracles and false prophets, and antichrists, and blind teachers, with which the world is and always will be infested.

Humility is the absolute requisite, because the truths of Revelations came to us by way of authority. Let this be remembered forever. These truths did not take their rise from the study of natural phenomena in the universe or in the mind of man. In other words, they are not the product of inductive reasoning after the manner of scientific systems. But as the only way of salvation for a world lost in sin, they were given to man as a gift from God directly from heaven. They came to us through the patriarchs, the prophets, and lastly through Christ, and therefore by the way of divine and supernatural revelation. No man could have discovered these truths or have invented them. All these truths about God, and the Trinity; the truths about the Divine Son, the Incarnation, the Redemption; about the stupendous realities of the world to come; and along with them, the spirtual and ethical precepts and principles to guide men's lives; all these together constitute that glorious "depositum," which Christ committed to His Church. As the Church received this depositum of truths by the way of authority, it is by the way of authority she hands it on. There is no other way. From their very nature these truths must be received if received at all, on authority and be instilled into minds of men as indisputable facts. Therefore, are purity and holy humility so necessary. "Unless you become as little children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

This is the profound lesson contained in St. Matthew, chapter the eleventh: "Jesus answered and said, I give

thanks to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to the little ones. Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in thy sight."

A FLORAL ODE TO MODESTY.

Dandelion!
You're a scion
Of a stock no one holds in repute;
Yet your face
Wants not grace,
As you pertly the green-sward dispute.
Can't you keep yourself in your own place,
To border some bed or fixed space?
For this you they hate
In your green salad state,
Your habits, our shorn lawns disgrace.
Mind you, worth, is no worth out of place!

You're as fair,
I declare,
As the daisy and buttercup rare.
Yet you come
So a-throng,
It causes your friends to despair.
'Tis vulgar your charms so to spread;
For the one, you come thousand instead;
Your yellow,
Makes sallow,
The park that we trim; 'tis ill bred.
"What's o'erdue, is ill done!" so 'tis said.

Then again,
I maintain,
Not in grace but you're wanting in sense.
Do not come,
Till you're won
By much coaxing and work and expense.
The exotic and poisonous weed,
Outweighs your legitimate meed;
Take the Poppy—
Narcotic,
Tho rare, it is otherwise worthless indeed.
'Tis the scarce one, the sought one, will lead!

Here then lies
My advice,
To which added you'll mark a deep threat;
Come single,
And mingle,
When and where I will find you a stead.
If accordingly you'll not reform,
I'll hate, and with merciless scorn,
Will up-dig you,
Dissect you,
And kill you and scatter your limbs to the storm.
'Tis yourself then, will have done you this harm!

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

PART ONE

Who has not heard the story of Lourdes? It is hardly seven decades ago when the whole Catholic world was amazed and entranced with the report of a heavenly drama that was being enacted on the outskirts of Lourdes, an obscure village lying at the foot of the Pyrenees.

Three poor little girls had set out from their home to gather drift-wood on the banks of a mountain-stream called the Gave. Hardly had they arrived at the brook, and whilst two of the girls were busy gathering the twigs and branches which the turbulent stream had brought down from the mountains above, the eldest of the three, Bernadette, who had directed her steps to a bluff known as the Massabielle Rocks, all of a sudden fell on her knees, and apparently forgetting all about the purpose for which she had come, began with rapt attention to say the rosary with her eyes uplifted and fixed in ectasy.

What had happened? She was ravished by an apparition of a beautiful lady who standing from a cloud of ineffable light, was looking heavenward with a countenance of wonderful sweetness. The figure wore a robe of white with a blue girdle and from her hands which

were joined in prayer hung a rosary of milk-white beads. Eighteen times was this vision repeated and hundreds and thousands of people came out to the Massabielle Rocks to witness and to marvel at the transfiguration of the peasant girl,—her luminous eyes and angelic pose,—whenever an apparition was on.

It was upon one occasion of the many times that this celestial lady appeared to the blessed girl, that Bernadette at the command of her parish priest, asked: "Please, my lady, do tell me your name, and who you are?" Three times the request was repeated and a fourth time. Then it happened, that the lady, coming out of her prayer, separated her hands and allowed them to fall to her side and with a look heavenward of inexpressible gratitude, exclaimed: "I am the Immaculate Conception!" "Ask her," Bernadette was also told "whether it displeases her if we accompany you?" To which the Blessed Virgin Mary, for you see it was she, again replied: "They and others also may come; I wish to see everybody."

Here then in this double disclosure from the lips of The Immaculate, we have the whole teaching and practice of the Church expressed in what regards the feast of The Immaculate Conception.

PART TWO

"I am the Immaculate Conception!" That is, I am she who, not in virtue of any condition of my nature, not in accordance with the common law or any law, but by special privilege alone through the merits of

Jesus Christ, was preserved free from original sin even from the first instant of my Conception. Solely through the merits of my Divine Son, I was preserved immune from everything which belongs to the nature of sin, from everything which is involved in original sin; hence, from all stain and guilt of sin; from all concupiscence, from all desire and inclination to sin; therefore, am I the Immaculate Conception.

These words, I am the Immaculate Conception, so miraculously abstract, what sense do you think, did they convey to the mind of that poor illiterate girl when they first fell upon her ears? And what do you understand by them? God only knows. The philosopher perhaps, the theologian certainly, can explain them. However, this much is certain: if as Christ said, only he who is pure of heart shall see God, then it is as applicable to the theologian as to the simplest Catechism child, that only to him who is pure of heart, are these transcendant words really intelligible; and moreover, that all the acquired knowledge bearing upon this article of faith of even the acutest of philosophers, unless he first of all realizes within his own soul the wickedness and enormity of sin, on the one hand, and the worth and grandeur of purity and sinlessness on the other, may not compare either for depth or for thoroughness, with what, perhaps, was granted the unschooled but innocent child of Lourdes by intuition to understand about this mystery.

As confirming and bearing out this statement is the fact, that whereas the theological difficulties hedging

round the question of the Immaculate Conception which many a theologian regarded as insuperable, were for centuries matter for agitation in the schools, there never was a time when this truth of Mary's ineffable privilege was not unhesitatingly received by the body of the faithful the world over. Have we not perhaps here an instance of what we read in Matt. xi, 25: "I give thanks to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones." St. Augustine, in his book "Nature and Grace," bears witness to the universality with which during the first five centuries of the Christian Era, the faithful applied to Mary Immaculate the text: "Thou art all fair, O my beloved, and there is no spot in thee!" for when treating of all sin and the sin of all, he stops to remark: "Excepting the Blessed Virgin Mary, of whom because of the honor due to God, I would have no mention made when there is question of sin." Indeed, it is only the reflex of this teaching of Augustine and of the early Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the reflex, also, of the sense and persuasion of the great Society of the Faithful during the subsequent ages, which in 1854 was formalized into and declared an article of faith by Pius IX, then gloriously reigning, when by the Solemn Constitution, Ineffabilis Deus, he promulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and fixed its annual commemoration for December eighth.

On every eighth of December, the whole Catholic world then is in festive array to honor her who in the

poet's felicitous words, is "our tainted nature's solitary boast." In every church and chapel on that day, the world over, is this signal and most glorious prerogative of Our Lady celebrated, and therefore, as a matter of course, with all pomp and ritual in every Benedictine Abbey. I say, as a matter of course, because, besides the common reason there is for every abbey also a special one for this. Among the first defenders of the Immaculate Conception were the sons of St. Benedict, with St. Isidore as the forerunner; the first promoter of the feast was the abbot of Edmundsbury, Anselm, nephew of the great St. Anselm of Canterbury. We know too that it was the classic dissertation, "Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata!" of another Benedictine, the learned abbot of Solemnes, Gueranger, which, by marshalling forth in serried ranks the theological proofs bearing upon the dogma, dispelled the last shade of hesitancy from the mind of Pius IX, and made its definition inevitable.

Nor do we wonder at the zeal of our pious confreres in all this. The traditions of our holy Order taught and urged them. For what after all is every Benedictine Abbey but a shrine of Mary? It is Mary's cloister, Mary's church. There was a time when every abbey and collegiate church had its special Mary altar and Mary priest. As at the tomb of SS. Peter and Paul the Mass is always that of the Apostles; and the Mass in the Holy House of Loretto, always that of the Blessed Virgin; so at Mary's altar the "Priest of Mary" was privileged to say daily the Votive Mass of Mary

found in our Missal and composed by the Benedictine Alcuin. All that the ingenuity of love could devise in gorgeous vestments, music, and lights, was made tributary to this daily Marian Mass. The very flowers on the altar were vocal of her fame: the green tangle of the Wild Climatis, called our Lady's Mantle; the Alchamilla of the uplands, our Lady's Bower; the Lady's Slipper and Marigold, and as poor Ophelia sang, The Rose of May and Rosemary—all bespoke the Blessed Lady's praise.

PART THREE

1. "They and others also may come; I wish to see everybody," this most loving of Mothers said to Bernadette. And why does she desire to see us? Is not the fact that she does desire it a sufficient answer? She desires it because she is our mother, because Christ desires it and Holy Church; and because it will be conducive to our spiritual welfare. She desires it because St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Francis de Sales, St. Alphonse, and all the Masters of the Spiritual Life, insist that we must come to her if we wish to come to Jesus. That the love and veneration of the Mother of God, therefore, is not merely the flowering or the poetry of religion, as is our devotion to some favorite saint or other, which we can take up or leave at our caprice or pleasure; but that love and veneration second only to that we owe to God, is due her in virtue of the law of the Incarnation. It is impossible to understand or to share fully in the benefits of the Incarnation without looking up to and loving Mary. You cannot separate the Mother

from her Divine Son. Briefly stated, that is the "Why" our Blessed Mother wishes all to come to her.

But there is another reason, an additional reason, for the faithful of the United States. The prelates of this country in the First Council of Baltimore in 1846, elected Mary under the title of her Immaculate Conception as the especial patroness of this our Union. She is, then, if not in an exclusive at least in an exceptional sense, our Mother, Patroness, Exemplar, and Pattern. Her virtues are the virtues of the human race. Certainly, in that she was conceived immaculate and in that she bears the honor of Mother of God, she will forever stand single and alone, "blessed amongst women." But these prerogatives aside, all men can possess in common with her those virtues on account of which she is so singularly honored. They can never equal them for she is the queen of angels and saints but with God's grace, they can imitate them. As the sublime model and ideal of men, especially through her obedience, her humility, her virginity and maternity, she has exercised a profound influence upon the civilization and sanctification of individuals and nations.

As mother and virgin she has forever vindicated and consecrated that vow of perpetual virginity by which men and women as spiritual fathers and mothers beget souls for heaven in the order of regeneration. And in our age, which has cast off all shame and responsibility and flouts the sanctity of the holy Sacrament of Marriage, her divine maternity has dowered the Church with countless Felizitas and Paulinas and Monicas, even

as the magnet of her virginity has given her many an Agnes and many a Cecilia.

2. "I wish to see everybody." Yes, but with a difference. None of us, like Blessed Bernadette, has ever seen the Immaculate Virgin, that incarnation of ravishing purity and holiness, face to face. Our only conception of her likeness is what our heart pure or corrupt has printed upon the canvas of our mind; or what we imagine her to be from the pictures and statues around us. Unfortunately, these pictorial representations of the peerless Virgin as often as not misrepresent her. It is but too common to see the Blessed Virgin imaged as a maiden frail and delicate and languidly good. And we ask ourselves of what significance is it, excepting as an expression of sentimental piety, for the Fathers of the Church in America to have chosen her as Patron of the United States? For a country so progressive and enterprising as ours, so feverishly aggressive in peace and in war; a Joan of Arc would serve better as patron and ideal; or a saint, if there is one, of the counting-house or loom. Fools that we are! Who gave inspiration and strength to Joan of Arc on the funeral pyre in Rouen? Whence do our Christian men and women gain that fortitude which sustains them in the crucial hours of life? It is the prayer and the example of her, who, as the Evangelist expressly states, fainted not but stood at the foot of the Cross on that bleak Good Friday afternoon. We forget that she is par excellence, that Valiant Woman of the Scriptures who has accomplished deeds and of whom Ec-

clesiastes says, "Strength and beauty are her clothing." The Blessed Virgin Mary is not so gentle and meek, as not when occasion requires to be stern and threatening, yea even, as the inspired writer says, "Terrible as an army set in array." The enemies of God and of His Church, she will crush under her heel as effectually as she crushed the ancient serpent. "Thou alone hast destroyed all heresies," says the Church to her in the Mass. To the pure and the virginal, however, and to the repentant sinner; indeed, with predilection to the sinner of good will, she is a mother whose love is boundless as an ocean without limits; a Mother with "the law of clemency on her lips," according to the Scriptures.

3. She invites us to come to her and we go. The mutual relation which follows is what we understand by Devotion to Mary. This devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is presumptuous unless it is governed by reason and faith. There before her altar a young man knelt in prayer. He had sinned much and grievously. Without sorrow in his heart, unwilling to change his evil ways, he turned his eyes upward to the statue which looked down upon him so humbly and kindly. With rash, ill-timed confidence he called out aloud: "Monstra te esse matrem!" ("Show thyself a mother!") Instantly, like a lightning flash, the words were hurled back at him: "First show thyself a son!" The picture changes. Again we see Bernadette in ecstasy. Suddenly she turns to her companion and says: "Antoinette, the Virgin now is smiling upon you!" And

Antoinette, who was a child of Mary, never forgot those words of Bernadette nor the smile of the Blessed Mother. In the sunshine of that smile she lived happily, in the recollection of it she died in peace. Yes, so it was and so it will be with us. If we come to our Holy Mother with good will, then no matter what our past has been she will welcome us with a smile, lovingly protect us during life, and at death receive us amongst the ransomed to her blessed bosom.